THE MUSICAL SHERLOCK HOLMES:

Frank Kidson and the English Folk Music Revival, c.1890-1926

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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the remarkable skill he displayed in tracing the history of any tune, the Leeds antiquarian Frank Kidson (1855-1926) became known to his associates as 'the musical Sherlock Holmes'. This study assesses both Kidson's unique contribution to the construction of a history of British music, and the position which posterity would subsequently accord him within it.

The postmodern era is understood as the era of re-evaluation of modernity, permitting a retrospective condensation of the modern mode of existence into a '*project of modernity*' whose imputed intentions and ascribed consequences are thereby exposed to examination.

Zygmunt Bauman's (1987) metaphors of the legislator and the interpreter respectively depict intellectual work in the historical configurations of modernity and post-modernity.

The activity of the 'legislator'/intellectual is central, in Bauman's formulation, to the project of modernity. Within the boundaries of the nation state - itself the fundamental modern reality - the legislator acts as the agent of order. Aesthetic frameworks promote unity on the national level whilst ensuring the maintenance of hierarchical divisions within the nation. It is legislative activity which determines the basis on which these are both constructed and implemented.

This study considers Bauman's assertions concerning the central role played by the legislator in the project of

modernity in relation to the early twentieth century English 'folk' revival. Yet its central figure is not a person who is to be presented as a legislator. The focus is instead on a **pioneer** - one whose field of interest became the subject of legislative action.

The 'pioneer' necessarily precedes the legislator in any particular field of cultural activity. Frank Kidson was principally known for his pioneering research into both the history of British printed music and the oral tradition.

Having fulfilled this pioneer function, Kidson's authority was superseded with the arrival of the legislator, in the guise of the 'expert' Cecil Sharp (1859-1924). Over twenty years after his death, it would be reported that Kidson had 'lived to be obscured where once he had been considered foremost in authority'. His decline in influence presents a mirror image of the legislative process.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

> *In a class to himself, we must place Mr. Frank Kidson, that industrious and patient collector of Folk music and all those odds and ends of the art which link us with the past, and which, try as we will, we cannot do without. To the antiquarian, music truly owes a deep debt of gratitude* (Sutcliffe Smith, 1928:54).

> *Few Leeds people, I imagine, realised what a remarkable man the late Mr. Frank Kidson actually was. It was not only that his range of knowledge in his chosen subjects was so wide and out of the ordinary, but he carried it all very modestly* (*Leeds Mercury*, 09.11.1926).

> *... less happily he lived to be obscured where once he had been considered foremost in authority* (*Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1948:135).

Frank Kidson (1855-1926) was born in Leeds, 'seldom left it' (Broadwood, 1927:iii), and died there. When asked his chief occupation, he once replied that he was "a journalist and a bit of an author" (Graham, 1927:49). He was also variously artist, photographer, antiquarian, bibliophile, Dickensian, local historian, song collector, editor, playwright, poet, song writer, radio broadcaster and leading authority on such diverse subjects as old Leeds pottery and the history of British printed music.

If, at the end of the twentieth century, Kidson is remembered at all, it is as a **pioneer**; a person who by definition is 'among the first in new fields of enterprise' (Chambers, 1993:1297). An examination of Kidson's experience in this capacity will provide the focus for a study which lays particular emphasis on the issues surrounding the search, in the broadest sense, for an English national music.

> *... the self and the social always constitute one another* (Joyce, 1994:14).

The juxtaposition of an individual against the broad sweep of socio-cultural movements necessarily incurs a shift of emphasis from one to the other. Sometimes the two will conjoin, but at other times the detailing of events and analysis of cultural phenomena will prove essential in the provision of context.

This introductory chapter concludes by considering the nature of 'history' in the light of post-modern thought. Does this discipline retain validity as a means of recovering the past when the problematic relationship between the project of modernity and history itself has been highlighted? Or will engagement with contemporary discourse permit examination of the principles governing the construction of the social world? It is suggested that history, as a form of empirical social enquiry, remains viable only when guided by theory.

The theory which this study endeavours to test is delineated in *Chapter 2*. At the core of the theoretical framework lies Bauman's analysis of the project of modernity. We examine the central role within it which Bauman ascribes to the **legislator**, and the importance of **culture** as the domain where such legislator/intellectuals exercise their power.

Pioneer activity in mapping out a particular field of activity is a prerequisite of the legislator's entry to it. *Chapter 3* examines Kidson's pioneering participation in the construction of a history of British printed music - itself

central to the notion of musical '*Renaissance*'. The twin themes of **accuracy** and **collaboration** underpin both that project and this chapter, where a network of fellow musical antiquarians is reconstructed.

The legislator is dependent on scholarly interest in the 'folk' and their culture to provide material which can be ordered and imbued with meanings, prior to its dissemination to the wider public (Raun and Plakans, 1990:133). ***Chapter 4*** similarly establishes Kidson's pioneer credentials in the collection of material from the oral tradition. My research has revealed that considerable parts of Kidson's collection derived not, as previously supposed, from the 'folk', but fellow Leeds antiquarians.

The theoretical basis of the concept of 'national' music, and the beginnings of attempts to apply it in England, are examined in ***Chapter 5***. The context for subsequent **legislative** activity is thereby established. Kidson is recruited to the new Folk-Song Society on account of the authority derived from his **pioneer** status.

Legislative action is multi-directional. In ***Chapter 6*** we consider the Competitive Music movement, which aimed at musical proficiency based on international standards: the nation would benefit from mass instruction in supra-national art.

The gathering together of musical rural dwellers in large numbers appeared to provide a unique opportunity for folk-song collectors: the need to seek out the 'folk' had been removed. Once again, Kidson's **pioneer** authority

determined his participation.

Chapter 7 sees the appearance of a legislator with a programme which, whilst of potentially universal application, is nevertheless designed to be implemented on the specifically local (*i.e.* national) level.

Working to a model which presupposes the existence of a 'garden' culture, Cecil Sharp - here presented as the epitome of the legislator - sets out to find examples of it.

Having fulfilled his pioneer function, Kidson's authority begins to be superseded as Sharp assumes the complementary roles of folk-song 'expert' and leader of the folk-song 'cult'.

Sharp's theory-led research has produced material - 'proof' - which can now be employed to validate that same theory. *Chapter 8* considers his *English Folk-Song: some conclusions*; a manual which legislates what folk-song is, which songs are folk-songs, and what they represent. Folk-song's centrality to Sharp's legislative programme will ensure that national revival is not limited to the musical sphere.

This chapter also considers challenges to the assumptions on which the viability of Sharp's theory rests.

The Dancing Men - in the form of hieroglyphic messages - caused the 'real' Sherlock Holmes to travel to Norfolk on one of his adventures. Participation in the Folk-Song Competition at Stratford brought his 'musical' counterpart close to involvement in Sharp's struggle to wrest control

of the folk-dance movement.

Chapter 9 examines the process whereby folk-dance was brought within the bounds of Sharp's legislative authority. It also offers a brief consideration of Sharp's character, focusing on his perceived autocratic tendencies.

In *Chapter 10* we look back to assess how the development of the 'cult' directly affected Kidson. Since the 'meaning' of a cultural artefact is imposed rather than inherent, we consider the basis of the different assessments which Kidson and Sharp would make of a song collected in the field.

The 'authoritative statements' which legislators make become 'correct and binding' (Bauman, 1987:4), and we also see how Kidson was obliged to come to terms with the legislation which Sharp had enacted.

Kidson responds to the 'cult' in *Chapter 11*. His authority is now residual, and his ideas on folk-song consequently judged in accordance with those which have been legislated by Sharp.

Kidson rejected much of the cult's ideology. But were his opinions nevertheless to some extent conditioned by it? This notion also receives consideration.

Chapter 12 concludes the study.

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HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND 'THE PROJECT OF MODERNITY'

> *The gradual change of habits & thoughts from one generation to another is so slight that it is as impossible to mark its growth as to mark the growth of a flower. All we know is that the flower has sprung up & blossomed & all we know in the other case is that things have altered - inexplicably certainly, but radically & no one can point to the exact period of when the change took place* (Frank Kidson, *In the Days of My Grandfather* [MS lecture], 04.12.1914).

To an antiquarian[1] like Kidson, the mechanisms of cultural change were plainly a mystery. Events could be documented and 'facts' constructed, but cultural change just somehow happened.

From a vantage point at the other end of the twentieth century, it is suggested that contemporary discourse may render these same mechanisms open to analysis.

As a selective assortment of putative facts, conjectures, assumptions, and previous interpretations, the discourse of history is inherited by succeeding generations as a constructed 'reality', but one which can be reconstructed in the light of contemporary concerns: since it can only be known through representations, the relationship between historiography and any posited historical reality of the past extends no further than this. These contemporary concerns will have a strong bearing on the kind of history which is written in a particular era, since, despite Weber's belief in a free-floating intelligentsia, historians themselves are bound by the time, place and climate of opinion within which they

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[1] 'a person who studies, collects or deals in relics of the past' (Chambers, 1993:69).

both live and work, and which provides a focus to which all other periods of historical time are related. In consequence, as Yeo recognised, the texts - and 'truths' - which are produced will be reflective of the period, culture and vantage points within which they are produced (1990:120,125).

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> *... the need to engage with contemporary discourse on modernity arises as much, and indeed I would argue more, from what this discourse can bring to history than from what history can bring to it* (Joyce, 1995[a]:73).

Such discourse has given historians much food for thought, finding expression not only in terms of the problem of writing social history in the 1990s, but the possibility of writing' history' at all 'in these post-modern times' (Vernon, 1994:81). Through presenting new ways of looking at the past, what many perceive to be a problematic relationship between the project of modernity and the nature of 'history' itself has been highlighted. The response of historians to post-modern theory has spanned a spectrum ranging from outright rejection to wholehearted endorsement. Through his 'warning' that the continued viability of social history had been 'brought seriously into question' (1991:217), Lawrence Stone came to exemplify the former position.

Whilst Eley and Nield express concern that many historians are either 'shying away from' or 'simply ignoring' an 'important challenge of contemporary social and cultural theory', they nevertheless feel that Stone

'still has no peer' in representing the 'closed-mindedness and arrogance of post-modernism's more extreme critics' (1995:356).

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> *Twenty-five years ago, social history seemed a viable and exciting strategic ground from which to elaborate creative and valuable forms of analysis ... In the meantime, the strategic ground has shifted in all sorts of ways towards 'culture'* ... (Eley and Nield, 1995:364).

Perhaps once seen as radical, social history has become an entrenched institutional form of writing and teaching history (Vernon, 1994:81), at least in Britain. As Kadish demonstrated, such scholarly exclusiveness both determines and upholds the criteria governing 'legitimate' scholarship (1988:183). In emphatically stating that history is *'the human past as it is known from the work of historians'* (1995:12) - in other words, it is only historians who know what historians really do - Marwick writes as the representative and defender of an 'institutional' view of historiographic orthodoxy, offering a conventionalist notion of the kind of knowledge professional historians produce (Lloyd, 1996:191; Roberts, 1996:225; White, 1995:236,245).

What Marwick perceived as the 'presumptuous and ill-informed criticisms which the 'postmodernists' ... make of history' were best countered, he believed, 'through a careful restatement of what it is historians actually do, and why they do it' (1995:5).

A hostility or at least a blindness to theory has been systematically built into their discipline by historians

(White, 1995:244), and Marwick's advocated 'Historical Approach' could best be described as an exposition of the 'common sense' or empirical realist approach to historical enquiry. Roberts suggests that 'most' historians - feeling 'no need' for a 'self-conscious, separate and distinct theoretical analysis of their discipline' - work on such a basis, in the belief that 'the dominant discourse of knowledge in history is coterminous with the common sense discourse of everyday life' (1996:221,224).

Since it implies the availability to the historian of self-evident truths, Lloyd felt that the adoption of this approach should be considered a form of prejudice. To follow 'common sense' allows the prejudging of issues of fact, interpretation, judgement, and explanation. Furthermore, since an 'unmediated sense of perception of the phenomenal evidence is all that is required in order to know the reality of the world', anyone equipped with 'common sense' is absolved of the need to engage in methodological or theoretical enquiry (1996:193,197): as, indeed, Roberts is happy to claim.

Dominant ideologies can make others appear marginal or oppositional - we might consider, for instance, the overtones associated with the notion of heresy - simply by virtue of the entrenched and thus seemingly 'natural' or non-ideological position which they occupy. The appeal to 'common sense' is a characteristically 'modern' recourse, since whilst the attributes of common sense are far from constant, it nevertheless persists in demonstrating an

inherently reasonable quality. Such notions as divine intervention, and the fruits of moral righteousness, which Kadish (1988:192) suggests were fully incorporated in, or even central to Victorian constructions of what were then called the 'lessons' of history, might be problematic in the late twentieth century. Yet they were, no doubt, imbued with the 'common sense' of their time.

Lloyd believes that historians should instead aspire to the provision of explanations of phenomena and processes, going beyond common sense 'to make historical *discoveries* and explain, *inter alia*, common sense itself' (1996:203-4).

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> *There should be no place for history that eschews theory, nor theory ... that eschews history. History IS empirical social enquiry tout court* (Lloyd, 1996:203).

At the other end of the spectrum from Stone, at least in Eley and Nield's formulation, we find Patrick Joyce. This 'self-appointed historical advocate' is criticised for presenting his commentary as

> ... the new, self-evidently persuasive, overpowering logic of the age, of contemporary enquiry, a truth that cannot be opposed, that somehow supersedes everything else, everything that comes before (1995:355).

Eley and Nield clearly have reservations about Joyce's style. Yet for the purpose in hand, his forthright expression of his position is surely all to the good. From Joyce's self-ascribed post-modern perspective, 'modernity' describes a subject and a society which, while real in their consequences, are themselves elements in a project.

This project of modernity disguises the fact that 'individual' and 'society' are not real, 'objective' entities, but historical and normative creations, designed to handle the exigencies of political power and social order (1995[a]:83;1995[b]:8).

The origins of 'sciences' and 'histories' centred upon the social are inseparable from modernity's project (1995[a]:77; Kirk, 1994:221). As the 'offspring' of modernity (1995[a]:73), 'history' is inherently flawed through its engagement in 'not innocently naming the world but creating it in its own political and intellectual image' (1995[a]:73-4). Since the conceptual apparatus of 'modernist' social thought did not merely reflect the reality of its day but actively created it, 'history' was the product of its own historical times (1995[b]:71).

The whole concept of 'society', as utilised in those disciplines devoted to its study, is inherently bound up with that of the modern nation-state with its 'clearly defined boundedness' (Giddens, 1990:13,14). Indeed, 'society' purported to be not only the nation-state's abstract model, but its concrete embodiment (Joyce, 1995[a]:81;1995[b]:71). Despite arguments concerning the international nature of academic endeavour, Heuser (1990:417) suggests that it is most viable to think in terms of different countries with differing cultures producing their own national style and tradition of historiography, as occurs in the political and literary spheres.

This might be seen most clearly in the divergence of German historiography in the era following the establishment of the Federal and Democratic republics. Notions of German history and identity were themselves the invention of nineteenth century German historians, and Heuser examined how, from the 1960s onwards, West German historiographers dissected and disentangled history to provide 'good' and 'bad' histories, which in turn served to create a new German identity. Their counterparts in the East meanwhile presented this common past according to the Marxist pattern, whereby events or developments which did not fit were simply omitted or distorted (1990:419,420). Wolle, for instance, tells of a professor at Humboldt University answering his own question of "What is truth?" with the assertion that "Truth is what benefits the Party politically" (1991:91).

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> *If the social world is at bottom a human construct, it is only by looking at the principles of its construction that headway will be made, and this applies to the history of the social, as well as the theory of the social* (Joyce, 1995[a]:91).

Joyce saw Stone's 'warning' (1991) as less of a defence of history *per se*, than of one particular approach to the past. He believed the 'major advance' of post-modernism to lie in the realisation that

> the events, structures and processes of the past are indistinguishable from the forms of documentary representation, the conceptual and political appropriations, and the historical discourses that construct them (1991:208).

The foundations of the 'social history' paradigm were

undermined by this 'realisation', Joyce contended (1991:208). It is no longer feasible to consider humanity as occupying a place in history, with both a definite past and a predictable future: a characteristically modern outlook exemplified, for instance, by Elias (1939) in his assertion that

> ... in our time the fragments of the human past gathered in our minds and books by the work of many generations, are beginning slowly to fall into place in a cohesive picture of history and of the human universe in general ([*quoted in*] Giddens, 1982:319).

For Joyce, the anti-reductionist logic of post-modernism has undermined the notions of social totality and social determination on which such constructions rested (1991:209).

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There would doubtless be broad agreement that 'the real' exists independently of representations of it [*see, for instance,* Stone 1992:193], although the real at the same time affects these representations. Whilst post-modernist thought might question the idea of a clear distinction between the two, the existence of the real is not at issue (Joyce, 1993:84). But since the real can only ever be apprehended through various cultural categories, the key question is which version of it should predominate.

Kadish has shown how realist epistemology and ideology were built into history from its professionalization in the late nineteenth century (1988:197), the legacy of which has already received consideration. Joyce is concerned that in the present, 'history' is itself invoked not just as the

defender of the real, but as 'the incarnation of the real itself, as if the past silently bore witness to its own truth' (1995[a]:78-9). The result of questioning this relationship is 'to upset the sacred categories of so much social history, especially those with which historians have aimed to police their version of the real' (Joyce, 1993:84).

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> *When the concepts of a postmodernist sociology / sociology of postmodernism are seen to reveal the historical context of former sociologies, then it becomes possible to suggest that these new sociologies may reveal the reality of the past as well as the present* (Joyce, 1995[b]:71).

At this point we might clarify the understanding of 'Postmodernism' which has been adopted for the purpose of this study. The essential characteristic of postmodernity centres on an appreciation of the supposed failure and rejection of all metatheories or grand narratives which purport to be based on insight into the overarching meaning or metaphysics of history. This embraces the idea that there can no longer be any serious attempt to construct overarching or all-encompassing philosophical or theoretical frameworks or metatheories that can be used to make sense of the whole social world. Modernism, in contrast, was characterised by so many attempts to construct such frameworks, including the concept and theory of modernity itself (Lloyd, 1996:197; White, 1995:234).

For Bauman, as we shall see, the greatest impact of the contemporary reorientation of cultural discourse may be discerned in relation to the function of the intellectual

in society. Modernity provided the conditions and context whereby intellectuals could function as arbiters not only of truth, but also judgment and taste. Each had their allotted place in the constructed monolith of what was supposed to constitute knowledge. These 'privileged actors' were accorded a voice in the imposition of rational order on the world which was denied to the less favoured. As the occupants of an integral component of this edifice, historians functioned as historicists, determining and refining the nature of their discourse, and legislating on what might be included or excluded, highlighted or marginalised. Now that in the wake of deconstructionism the role of 'legislator' is no longer viable, intellectuals - including historians and other social theorists - have found it necessary to try to re-establish their social function through the adoption of that of 'interpreter' (1992:xi,23-4).

The 'pioneer'

The purpose of this study is to consider the development of the folk-song movement in the light of Bauman's assertions concerning the role played by the legislator in the project of modernity. In order to illustrate this the focus of attention will fall, perhaps paradoxically, not on a person who is to be presented as a legislator, but rather on a pioneer.

The legislator is necessarily preceded by the pioneer. Through their 'scholarly interest' (Raun and Plakans, 1990:133), pioneers both explore and map out the cultural

territory where legislative activity is to be carried out.

The pioneer is only ascribed this status by the fact of someone else following their steps - their endeavours establish a context in which the legislator can operate. The pioneers themselves also become subject to legislative action, since once the intellectual/legislator appears in the guise of 'expert', the status of the pioneer becomes subsidiary. To call someone a 'pioneer' is often an acknowledgement that their importance in a particular field has been superseded.

The new orthodoxy presented by the legislator establishes the criteria by which all other ideas are to be judged. If the ideas of others cannot be accommodated, they are necessarily deemed incorrect. This orthodoxy will also be applied retrospectively to reinforce pioneer status, through confirming that the pioneer and the beliefs which they espouse are increasingly outmoded and irrelevant.

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Biography

> *... in a sense it is only biography which can make available to us the detailed processes of historical change* (Stanley, 1992:234).
>
> *The message for biographers and historians is perhaps that all interpretative frameworks are machines that will grind out conclusions according to their own mechanisms* (Marcus, 1994:130).

The quintessentially modern genre of biography - an exercise in the retrospective imposition of order through the construction of a 'life' - is here employed to provide a critique of modernity.

The 'pioneer' whose biography has been appropriated for this purpose is Frank Kidson. Since the focus of this study impinges on only certain aspects of his life, much detail which might have appeared in a conventional biography falls outside its scope and has necessarily been omitted. Yet whilst the creation of a biography has not been the primary purpose of this study, it is nevertheless necessary to reflect on the nature of the genre.

Because the biographer, to Stanley, is 'a particular kind of historian', the epistemological issues which arise are the same as in any historical research and writing process: the interpretive role of the historian, the fragmentary and incomplete nature of available sources, and the role of writing in the creation of an account (1992:101).

Since our conception of what constitutes biography, as a conventional narrative form, is culturally and ideologically determined, all biographical studies rest on

certain assumptions. These emanate from the belief that there is a 'real' person 'out there' who has lived a life, and, furthermore, that this life can be studied, constructed, reconstructed, and written about (Homberger and Charmley, 1988:xii; Stanley, 1992:3,121).

The presence is conventionally assumed of the biographer as an 'outside observer' who attempts to reconstruct the life of the subject. This writer holds the position of a 'knowing author', capable of 'finding' people in their works, their letters, their diaries, or their relations with others (Denzin, 1989:19,45). Edel, for instance, believes it possible for the biographer to maintain a stance of both involvement and detachment in relation to their subject (1984:29,40-1,64), thereby rendering their role a neutral one. This approach is held to permit the composition of lives as if they were mosaics: 'an accumulation of little pieces of reality, shaped into an image' (1984:15-16). The interpretive process, we must assume, will make the image coherent.

One of the most fundamental assumptions which biography shares with history resides in the belief that it is concerned with 'truth' rather than 'fiction': it finds expression, for instance, in Edel's assertion that 'A writer of lives is allowed the imagination of form but not of fact' (1984:13). Yet to argue for a factually correct picture of a 'real' person fails to take account of the way that persons are actually created in texts and other systems of discourse.

In short, all biography is fiction to some degree. The biographer creates differences, oppositions and presences, thereby allowing the illusion to be maintained that the 'real' experiences of 'real' people have been captured. Instead, biographers create the persons they write about, just as in autobiography they create themselves (Denzin, 1989:82; Marcus, 1994:4,49).

Although conventionally presented as apparently absent from the text, the biographer stands between the subject and the reader, shaping, selecting, and presenting. This active controlling role of the biographer in shaping a life, and thereby guiding a reading, should, Stanley believes, be more openly acknowledged (1992:125,127,135).

The amassing of 'irrefutable verifiable detail' masks the true function of the biographer (1992:155), since material which fits the framework tends to be that which is selected. In consequence, biography should more properly be seen as 'artful construction within a narrative', whereby interpretations and conclusions are written as if they are 'inevitable products of their underpinning mass of announced fact'. Although presented as 'authorised facts', these are no more than 'authorised fictions' (1992:128-9, 155).

This situation arises because the biographer is 'textually denied'. The only way that this situation can be overcome is to acknowledge their presence at the centre of the process: the biographer's analytic interpretation should take the form of an 'intellectual autobiography'

(1992:155,169). By this means,

> ... the reflexivity involved in centring the role of the biographer opens up the processes of biography and thus its product to readers, who can thereby assess, reject, conclude differently when the textual products of biography are relatively open in this way (1992:155).

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> *... a trusty comrade is always of use. And a chronicler still more so* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Man With the Twisted Lip* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:129).

There is no biography, as such, of Frank Kidson. The nearest thing approaching it is a brief manuscript *Life of Frank Kidson*, written by Kidson's niece and companion Ethel (correctly, Emma Mary) Kidson, at some time after his death in 1926.

Ethel Kidson was some twenty years younger than her uncle. She lived with him from her seventeenth year until his death over thirty five years later. 'Never were two people more devoted to each other and surely never was a closer affection than that which grew up between us' ([?]1926:70-1), she subsequently wrote. If Kidson was known, for reasons which will become apparent, as 'the musical Sherlock Holmes', then Ethel decidedly deserves recognition as his Watson.

Ethel's unpublished work - my ***Bibliography***, incidentally, shows the archive location of all cited manuscript material - is now held in Leeds Central Library. It fills 139 pages of an exercise book, and deciphering her writing (in pencil) presents something of a challenge. Her purpose in writing it is unclear, since a detailed

appreciation on the part of the reader of the context of what she writes about is constantly assumed. Perhaps it was composed for the benefit of some future researcher - a conjecture given credence by the fact of this work being deposited in the Library, when so much else has evidently been lost.

Ethel's account is necessarily partial and must, strictly speaking, be taken as hagiography (*see, for instance,* Stanley, 1992:181). A great deal of information of which she could not have first hand knowledge is included - for instance, concerning her uncle's early life - and a large part of it must derive from conversations she had both with him and other family members.

Whilst letters and other documents become authorities for the historian when detached from their original function and assigned this new one (Wilson, 1993:306), Ethel Kidson's biography has been constructed with the purpose of informing others. She seems to have been aware of deficiencies in her narrative, yet at the same time impelled to continue by the responsibility which she felt had been thrust upon her. As she acknowledged,

> ... I wish I could say more but it is rather difficult to write things as they occur, and this attempt at an estimate of uncle and his work and that of his friends is I am aware very inadequate, but there is no one else to write it (?1926:101-2).

Other sources can demonstrate certain parts of her account to be factually incorrect. On the other hand, she includes information which, since it does not appear elsewhere, would have been lost had this *Life* not been

written. This is particularly true of the seemingly inconsequential detail which perhaps no-one else would have troubled to record, but which nevertheless lends a sense of life to her narrative.

Both local and national press provide a rich mixture of source material, ranging from articles on musical antiquities, through reports of events - often with speeches quoted verbatim - to general news items. Not only do such sources provide a level of detail which is generally otherwise unavailable; since the press reflects entirely contemporary concerns, there is an inherent immediacy which is largely absent from other forms of narrative account.

In the year before his death, Kidson prepared the *Foreword* for *The Battle of Briggate* (1925), a children's history book written by Maud M. Hummerston. There are two ways of imparting history, he suggested. One was 'by a dry-as-dust method in a chronicle form when the facts are baldly stated without the humanity which underlies them'. The other was 'by the pleasant method of picturing the effects upon the ... people of those things which have made up the history that those dry-as-dust chronicles have recorded'.

Through combining Ethel's 'humanity' with the 'dry-as-dust chronicle' available from other sources, it is hoped that something resembling Kidson's preferred style of constructing history has perhaps been achieved.

The History of this Research Project

Teleological historiography is never more transparent - at least in terms of how it might potentially be constructed - than when an account of the natural history of a research project is to be attempted. At such a time, the writer's complete biography effectively takes the form of an intellectual 'pick 'n' mix' counter where past influences await selection.

Since I am fairly confident that my interest in traditional music derives, on one level at least, from the wireless broadcasts of *Singing Together* in which we participated each week - the last echo, although I did not then know it, of the Edwardian scheme for teaching folk-song to children: many of our songs, such as *Barbara Allen*, *British Grenadiers* and *Heart of Oak* had appeared in the *National Song Book* of 1906 - I might, for instance, choose to begin this section in Mrs. Nicholls' class at Settle Primary School in the academic year of 1961-2.

Should I go further back? To begin life with parents from different countries - in this case, England and Latvia - almost predetermines some degree of interest in matters pertaining to national identity and culture. Moving forward chronologically, marriage to one who those of similar origin might designate an Ulster Scot inevitably strengthened such interests.

Serendipity plays its part as well. Made redundant in 1992 from my employment of the previous eleven years, I took the opportunity to enrol on an M.A. course. Having

visited Latvia at the beginning of that year - a trip which even a few years before would have been beyond contemplation - I was keen to learn something of its cultural history. An interesting dissertation topic on the construction of national identity in this way suggested itself.

I already knew of the early twentieth century English folk-song revival, and was aware that other countries had experienced similar revivals. But I had not hitherto appreciated how widespread - and, in the light of my research into the creation of high cultures from low by intellectual activists - seemingly mechanistic in nature such phenomena appeared to be. The very concept of 'national music' itself was evidently worth investigating.

This time England would provide the context. I began to research *English National Music*, but it became apparent that a narrower focus was required. Malcolm Taylor at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library happened to mention that Vic Gammon had moved to Huddersfield. Vic was recruited to the supervisory team, and suggested centring the research on Frank Kidson. This study is the result, and I need hardly mention that it owes much to his participation.

As it happens, Kidson was a figure I had already considered and rejected. As a native of Leeds, he in some respects presented an obvious choice. On the other hand, although both Leeds Central Library and the Mitchell Library in Glasgow hold small amounts of manuscript material, and some of his letters to colleagues feature in

various collections in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House in London, there is no Kidson archive, as such, in existence. This was clearly not in his favour. Moreover, whilst Kidson would receive mention as a 'pioneer' in almost any text dealing with the first folk-song revival, I had been put off by the fact that he had invariably disappeared from the story by the time that Cecil Sharp, apparently heralding what seemed to be the interesting and important part, appeared. Fortunately, Vic knew enough about Kidson to appreciate that, at least in this instance, historiographical silence need not equate with absence.

<u>Kidson and the writer</u>

Some kind of relationship inevitably develops between the biographer and their subject in this 'meeting of two lives' (Holroyd, 1988:97). Indeed, this relationship is at 'the very core of the biographical enterprise' (Edel, 1984:14).

Stanley suggests that biography is 'like marriage or any other longstanding intimate relationship', and goes on to describe the 'living relationship' which she feels exists between herself and Hannah Culwick, her subject (1992:69,158-9). This is an attractive notion, to the extent that it adequately reflects the way in which the writer might relate to their subject, and perhaps feel the need to represent or defend both their reputation and interests. It can also accommodate those changes in both perception and expectation which the biographer might well

at some point experience.

But it is a notion which nevertheless incorporates its own limitations. The concept of 'partnership', implicit in such a depiction, is inherently problematic, and particularly so when the subject is deceased - as indeed is the case with both Culwick and Kidson. One of the partners to the new relationship is active, an interloper who instigates everything which occurs within it, whilst the other, thrust into the role of unwitting participant, is necessarily the opposite. The imbalance of power which such a situation incurs is hardly a satisfactory basis for any such 'marriage'.

It would be fair to say that I have learnt quite a lot about Frank Kidson, and feel that I in some sense now 'know' him. But it is impossible for this relationship to be reciprocal. Although he might somehow 'speak' to me through his writings, Kidson neither knew anything of me, nor ever will. Leaving aside, for the moment, questions of objectivity and subjectivity - since everything is in the end subjective - I have appropriated his biography for my own ends, whatever these might be, and the person I write about is, to some degree, inescapably my own creation.

Or perhaps, on reflection, mine and Ethel's.

I have already referred to Ethel Kidson's *Life* of her uncle. It is in one respect a valuable resource - a concentrated character study composed by the person best placed to do so. Yet this apparent virtue is at the same time its major defect. Reflexivity ensures that once this

account has been read, any subsequent material is interpreted in the light of it - thereby inadvertently confirming the 'accuracy' of what Ethel had written. Can 'my' characterisation, in the end, be anything more than an elaboration of hers?

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> *He was first, last and all the time a Yorkshireman of the West Riding* (Ethel Kidson, 1948:128).

Like Kidson, I have never lived outside the boundaries of the old West Riding. Although this may be of little consequence in itself, the sense of place can be particularly evocative. I have visited many of the places where he collected, and even when routinely visiting Leeds now find it difficult to suppress an awareness of those past presences which have entered my own autobiography.

Kidson spent almost his entire life in just two houses. Across the street from the Yorkshire Television studios, 128 Burley Road is clearly visible from the train as it crosses the Kirkstall Road viaduct. If I travel by bus, 5 Hamilton Avenue can almost be glimpsed from the number 36 as it makes its way along Chapeltown Road.

Over seventy years ago J.A. Fuller Maitland found the latter dwelling 'rather commonplace' (*The Times*, 12.11.1926); a description even more appropriate now, and equally worthy of application to both addresses. Neither building bears any indication of the previous residence of a local notable within it.

Yet these two houses were the background against which

Kidson's whole life was played out. Burley Road was where, as a child, he gave toy theatre performances to his parents and their servant Ann Thompson. Ethel came to live with him here after the death of his mother, and it is where both *Traditional Tunes* and *British Music Publishers* were written. Kidson's book collection had its origins in this house, and such figures as Baring Gould, Lucy Broadwood and her cousin J.A. Fuller Maitland, Kate Lee, Alfred Moffat and Mary Wakefield were amongst the visitors to it (Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:25-9,70,75-7,81-4,108).

The last twenty years of Kidson's life were passed at Hamilton Avenue in Chapeltown. Here, following his death, Ethel Kidson would be left alone; 'anchored down', as she told Lucy Broadwood (*letter*, 25.08.1929), by her uncle's various collections. It is difficult now to imagine that when Vaughan Williams conducted his *Sea Symphony* at Leeds, he and his first wife - who 'charmed' Ethel - spent their Sunday afternoon and evening in this house ([?]1926:104-5).

Walking around the city it is hard to ignore the many further associations, but lack of space precludes mention of them all. We might however picture the young Kidson, as Ethel did, walking to school along Great George Street, wearing his 'plaid frock' and a hat with an ostrich feather in it. Or his recollections of a large construction site on the Headrow could be related. Only a small boy at the time, Kidson had been set upon a stone and told to dance. The purpose behind this singular instruction was that 'he ever afterward could say he had danced upon the topmost stone of

the Town Hall' ([?]1926:2-3,10-11).

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Kidson was himself no stranger to the incorporation of biographical material in historical narrative. Of the time when her uncle was engaged in the writing of *British Music Publishers*, Ethel Kidson comments that

> ... these music publishers became to him living people and he would talk of old Johnny Playford and John Walsh till I felt they must be living people ... ([?]1926:91-2).

Kidson had managed to restore some kind of 'reality' to his subjects; just as I, in turn, have tried to do with him.

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In this opening chapter, we have introduced both **Frank Kidson**, the central figure of this study, and **Ethel**, his niece and biographer. We have also considered the nature of the discipline of **history** in the light of contemporary discourse; the use of **biography** to illuminate the processes of historical change; and the necessity for historical research to be guided by **theory**.

Bauman's work on the project of modernity - the theory which at the same time both guides, and is tested by, this study - has been prefaced, and the central importance noted of **culture** as the domain in which the **legislator** operates.

The next chapter will give a more detailed exposition of the theoretical framework.

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Chapter 2: LEGISLATOR to INTERPRETER:

the changing role of the intellectual

At the core of the theoretical framework lies Bauman's analysis of the project of modernity. We examine the central role within it which Bauman ascribes to the legislator, and the importance of culture as the domain in which such intellectuals exercise their power.

Modernity or post-modernity?

The debate over the last decade or so which has centred on the question of whether the 'modern' age, even in its advanced form (for instance, 'high' or 'late' modernity), continues, or whether contemporary reality is instead characterised by its 'postmodern' condition, has raised issues which are of great relevance to historical enquiry.

Whilst modernity could once be loosely understood as an almost universal present with a predictable future, arguments via the post-industrialism debate over the possibility of its conclusion have necessitated, as a prerequisite, the analysis and evaluation of what might actually be said to constitute the condition of modernity. Without being able to reconstruct and define modernity's particular characteristics, it is not possible to evaluate those aspects of the contemporary world which might be seen to reflect its passing. For the purpose of this discussion, it is accepted that modernity represents more than a simple construction made necessary in order to justify and give credence to the post-modernity which could supersede it.

Change renders transparent many features which were previously taken for granted as 'natural' - they are thrown into relief by new modes of thought which condition our view of what has been. Contemporary conceptions of 'modernity' could never be the same as those which held before the start of the 'postmodern' discourse. On this basis, most social theorists would accept that at least a phase of 'modernity', as the word is generally understood, has passed. Differences of opinion are largely confined to matters relating to the level of change.

These may be profound. Featherstone, for instance, identifies an emphasis in the debate which is 'firmly on the sense of the relational move away' from modernity. This suggests 'an epochal shift', or complete break with modernity, thereby incurring the emergence of 'a new social totality' with its own distinct organising principles (1991:3).

A lesser degree of emphasis is used by writers such as Giddens, who sees disjunctions resulting from what is termed 'the self-clarification of modern thought', as the remnants of tradition and providential outlooks are cleared away (1990:51).

Yet a greater understanding of the nature of modernity need not depend on its conclusion. In one limited respect, a present condition of either high modernity or post-modernity would serve equally well as a vantage point for the examination of a time - at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, providing the

context for this study - which was indisputably of the modern age. To see current developments in terms of modernity coming to understand itself, rather than the overcoming of modernity as such, permits the continuing legitimacy of the rationale of historical and sociological enquiry which could not be accommodated by that postmodernist thinking which accepts a plurality of heterogeneous - and equally legitimate - claims to knowledge. In other words, their traditional status as what Bauman terms 'a privileged discourse, as a supplier of rational models of social reality and managerially useful knowledge of its processes' (1992:xxv) could be maintained.

Instead, Giddens sees the concept of post-modernity as a 'mistake' which hampers an 'accurate understanding' of changes occurring within modernity (1990:51), and quite reasonably points out that the notion of post-modernity superseding modernity 'appears to invoke that very thing which is declared now to be impossible: giving some coherence to history and pinpointing our place in it' (1990:47): historical periodisation is an inherently modern ideal. Similarly, the very notion of a postmodern sociological understanding is contentious, since it cannot avoid the 'totalizations, systematizations and legitimation' which are inherent in the 'flawed' grand narratives (such as science, humanism, Marxism, feminism, and so on) of modernity (Featherstone, 1991:9).

In contrast, high modernity is presented as a period where the consequences of modernity are more radicalised

and universalised than before (Giddens, 1990:3): indeed, 'We have not moved beyond modernity but are living precisely through a phase of its radicalisation' (1990:51). So whilst acceptance of the concept (itself integral to modernity) of the 'grand narrative', which places us in history as beings with a definite past and a predictable future, has effectively evaporated, modernity can be constructed as 'the other' in an attempt to achieve a sense of greater historical distance through the creation of a definable 'past' which can be transcended.

Inherent in the introduction of new concepts and terminology is a certain level of confusion over meaning. As Bauman points out, 'postmodernity' means many different things to many different people (1992:vii). To him, at least in the form of constructive rather than destructive deconstruction (1992:ix), it seems to permit analysis in a framework similar to that denoted by Giddens' 'high modernity'. Indeed, the postmodern era is understood as the era of re-evaluation of modernity - and, by the same token, 'of a retrospective condensation of the modern mode of existence into a 'project of modernity', whose imputed intentions and ascribed consequences are thereby exposed to examination' (1992:115).

Again, 'Postmodernity may be conceived of as modernity conscious of its true nature - modernity for itself' (1992:187). Yet at the same time, the passing of certain characteristics crucial to the modern condition necessitates the description of our present context as

post-modern, or modernity emancipated from the particular consciousness which these characteristics imposed (1992:187-8).

Whilst Giddens and Bauman provide a similar analysis of modernity, to the former it is the continuities which are most important, hence a present condition of high modernity. To the latter, the differences are profound enough to require the complete separation implied by post-modernity, as 'a self-contained social condition defined by **distinctive features of its own**' (1992:188;([*see also*] 1987:117)). A modified theory of modernity is consequently, for Bauman, inadequate.

It is best then to look first at what characteristics are seen to exemplify the modern condition.

The Modern era

Many attempts have been made to locate 'modernity' as a distinct period in the historical frame, although the lack of consensus on what is to be dated has not facilitated agreement. The onset of industrialisation in the nineteenth century has traditionally been viewed as the beginning of the modern era, and Williams places what he sees as the 'dominant version' between 1890 and 1940 (1989:32).

Whilst recognising that there can be no absolute beginning nor predetermined goal in this history, more recent writers, such as Hall, would look instead to the decline of feudalism, with its associated rapid and extensive social development, for the origin of a set of

processes which resulted in what might be called modern societies (1992:1,11). Featherstone (1991:3) claims general acceptance for a view which locates the origins of modernity in the Renaissance, so that it is defined in relation to Antiquity. Burke (1978) similarly uses the term 'early modern' to cover the period between about 1500 and 1800, which is held to mark the break with the old and the rise of the new.

Bauman encapsulates the notion of 'modernity' in his view of:

> a historical period that began in Western Europe with a series of profound social-structural and intellectual transformations of the seventeenth century and achieved its maturity: (1) as a cultural project - with the growth of Enlightenment; (2) as a socially accomplished form of life - with the growth of industrial (capitalist, and later also communist) society (1991:4).

Modernity grew directly out of the Enlightenment, concerned as it was with progress, science, reason and nature. The notion of 'the social', as a distinct form of reality amenable to rational investigation and explanation, was recognised in this era, hence permitting the subsequent development of what came to be known as the social sciences. The prospect was opened up of an unending era of material progress and prosperity. Mastery over the forces of nature would result from the expansion of human knowledge and understanding, whilst prejudice and superstition would be abolished (Hall, 1992:2).

Modern institutions

Giddens (1991:14,15) similarly uses the term 'modernity' in a general sense, to refer to institutions and modes of behaviour established initially in post-feudal Europe. These can be loosely equated with industrialism, which is characterised as 'the social relations implied in the widespread use of material power and machinery in production processes', representing one institutional axis of modernity. A second dimension is capitalism, 'a system of commodity production involving both competitive product markets and the commodification of labour power'.

Distinct from both of these are the institutions of surveillance, which form the basis of the increase in organisational power which is associated with the emergence of modern social life. Giddens uses the term to refer to 'the supervisory control of subject populations', whether in 'visible' form, or through the use of information to coordinate social activities. In turn, this dimension can be separated from control of the means of violence in the context of the industrialisation of war.

Hall identifies four major social processes which influence the formation of modern societies. These - the political, the economic, the social and the cultural - function as the 'motors' of the formation process, thereby transforming the existing traditional societies into modern ones. The different processes work according to extended but different historical time-scales, and their interaction leads to 'fortuitous' variable and contingent outcomes. So

it is not a single historical process leading towards a 'prescribed and inevitable end', despite the sense of order which is inevitably imposed by narrative. However the transition to modernity could not occur without this interaction between them. Although Marxists tried to claim this role for the economic, no one process, on its own, provides an adequate explanation of the formation of modern societies. Neither can any single process be given explanatory priority. For instance, whilst the evolution of the histories of the modern state and the modern economy differ, their interaction produced the national economy, which cannot itself function outside of specific social and cultural conditions.

In modernity, the four processes become articulated into distinct zones, or 'organisational clusters', of social practice, which are constitutive in, rather than reflective of, the modern world. These are the domains of the polity, the economy, the social structure and the cultural sphere (1992:1,5-13). Modernity is therefore best seen as

> the outcome, not of a single process, but of the condensation of a number of different processes and histories ... each process led to the emergence of certain distinctive features or social characteristics, and it is these features which, taken together, provide us with our definition of 'modernity' (1992:6).

Since the operation of these processes gives a distinctive shape and form, it is better to see the result not just as 'societies', but, in terms of both process and structure, as social formations; 'societies with a definite

structure and a well-defined set of social relations' (1992:7). So different societies will take different paths to modernity, and inevitably retain inherent differences. Moreover, the idea of a necessary forward movement cannot be taken for granted: indeed the under-development of some societies may be systematically linked to the over-development of others (1992:10,11).

> ... what is quintessentially modern is not so much any one period or any particular form of social organisation so much as the fact that a society becomes seized with and pervaded by [the] idea of ceaseless development, progress and dynamic change ... It is the shift - materially and culturally - into this new conception of social life which is the real transition to modernity (1992:15).

In consequence, there is no single 'modern', but rather a plurality of modernisms, each with its own specific national characteristics and significance (Lash, 1990:201). The nation state is the most prominent of the characteristic formations produced by modernity, providing a context for the 'society' which constitutes the sociologist's field of study - and whose 'problems' it was envisaged that the sociologist should eventually resolve (Bauman, 1992:76-78).

<u>The nation-state</u>

As a sociopolitical entity, the nation-state contrasts fundamentally with most types of traditional order. It develops only as part of a wider nation-state system, has very specific forms of territoriality and surveillance capabilities, and monopolises effective control over the means of violence. The connection between modernity and

totalitarianism is inherent, rather than contingent (Giddens, 1990:172). Indeed, it might be asked, what is totalitarianism, other than 'The project of a total order ... an artificially designed, all-embracing arrangement of human actions and their setting'? From this vantage point, competing totalitarian ideologies can be seen as no more than 'a family quarrel inside modernity'. The collapse of communism, modernity's 'most devout, vigorous and gallant champion', brought modernity itself to an end (Bauman, 1992:178,221-3).

The development of nation-states

Elias looks to the power vacuum resulting from the disintegration of the feudal system for the origin of the nation state. Competition between small dominions was subject to what he termed the 'dynamics of social intertwining', which promoted the integration of larger and larger units. Out of the territorial struggle between small dominions, eventually a single unit would emerge victorious. As the focal point about which a new larger dominion is integrated, the victor assumes the monopoly power which is offered by the centrally organised state. The previously freely competing regions and groups gradually grow together in this new unified state.

In their relationships with each other, the states are now in the same situation that the 'freely competing survival units', from which each state was formed, had earlier been. The power balances are 'analogous'. The resultant competition between states keeps 'our whole

society in a perpetual ferment of conflicts and crises'. Individual states are forced more and more into mutual opposition, since to refrain from pushing forward in international competition means to become weaker, and consequently more dependent on other states:

> As in every system of balances with growing competition and without a central monopoly, the powerful states forming the primary axes of tensions in the system force each other in an incessant spiral to extend and strengthen their power (1982:320).

Eventually, the only feasible goal for the individual state becomes the integration of other nations within their orbit, in order to derive the monopoly power that is associated with it. Since a balanced system of 'freely competing units' cannot be maintained indefinitely in a state of 'precarious equilibrium', this process inevitably culminates in 'struggles for supremacy over a system embracing the entire inhabited earth'.

The driving forces behind the rivalry between individual states, and the extension of the rule of the individual state, are both political and economic.

> Monopolies of physical violence and of the economic means of consumption and of production, whether co-ordinated or not, are inseparably connected, without one ever being the real base and the other merely a superstructure (1982:321).

According to this model presented by Elias, the political and economic are perpetually interdependent in the competitive spiral, and the same mechanisms govern the behaviour of both the successful merchant and the superpower: the difference is only one of scale. So the 'compelling forces of social interweaving' have determined

the direction of Western society from 'the time of utmost feudal disintegration to the present' (1982:319-322).

This explanation is clearly informed by the mid-twentieth century context in which it was framed, and, as such, could fairly be accused of being both teleological and historicist. Robertson notes, for instance, that Elias has often been criticised on account of his 'naive unilinear evolutionism' (1992:219). Its main value lies in being an understanding of modernity which was generated within itself.

The nation-state as 'fundamental reality'

The system of nation states is the foundation of the modern international order. The state faces inwards towards its subjects and citizens, and outwards towards the states system and the international economy. In consequence, the boundaries of the 'social' equate exactly to that of the nation-state in its guise as an 'imagined community'.

This is the term Anderson employs to define the nation, because the members of even the smallest nation 'will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'. In consequence, regardless of whatever level of inequality and exploitation may prevail, 'the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (1983:15,16).

It is in this sense that Hroch describes the modern nation as the 'fundamental reality', with nationalism functioning as a phenomenon which derives from the

existence of the particular nation. Although the concept of the 'nation' is specific to the territory in which it is employed, there is no modern nation without national consciousness, reflecting an awareness of membership in the nation. This consciousness, moreover, is a single consciousness, cutting across the various social strata and their diverse interests (1985:3,12,192).

The most important feature of the symbolic boundaries within which people are drawn together in the imagined community is that they define, by exclusion, those who do not belong. The formation of modern societies includes the construction of the language, the images, and the symbols which define these societies as 'communities' and set them apart, in their represented differences, from others. Such conditions promote the emergence of a mass society with shared institutions which socialise citizens to identify with existing social arrangements and the consensual ideology of the status quo.

As reflexively monitored systems, nation states exemplify another feature of modernity, which is the rise of the organisation. Less important to Giddens than their size or bureaucratic character is the concentrated reflexive monitoring which they both permit and entail (1991:15,16). Indeed,

> Who says modernity says not just organisations, but organisation - the regularised control of social relations across indefinite time-space distances (1991:16).

Modernity, as a post-traditional order, differed from what had preceded it in a number of important respects.

Indeed, contrast with tradition is inherent in the idea of modernity. The major discontinuous characteristic which Giddens holds modern life to possess is its 'peculiarly dynamic character'. This can be reduced to three elements, namely the separation of time and space, which provides the means of precise temporal and spatial zoning; the disembedding of social relationships from their local contexts, which permits their reorganisation across large space-time distances; and the reflexivity of modernity, which refers to 'the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge' (1990:5,36,53;1991:16-20,242).

The reflexivity of modernity

An appreciation of the reflexivity of modernity, especially in relation to the broad spectrum of what are known as the social sciences, is an element in the achievement of the condition of high modernity. The early proponents of modern science and philosophy believed themselves to be establishing a system of knowledge of the natural and social worlds which was based on reason, and, implicitly, certitude, rather than the perceived former sureties of tradition. But the anticipation that the social and natural environments would increasingly be subject to rational ordering proved to be unfounded. The reflexivity of modernity, as the re-entry of knowledge into the circumstances of action it analyses or describes, undermines the notions of both certainty and corrigibility.

This is particularly the case in the social sciences, but also in natural science, where 'fact' depends not on the accumulation of proofs, but on the methodological principle of doubt (1990:39;1991:21,28). In consequence,

> We are abroad in a world which is thoroughly constituted through reflexively applied knowledge, but where at the same time we can never be sure that any given element of that knowledge will not be revised (1990:39).

Indeed, it was the models of society created by modern sociology during the nineteenth century which gave modernity its characteristic form. Sociology has always functioned as the adjunct of modernity, and, since social reality was cast as an object of desired change, sociological discourse was formed within the perspective of managed social processes (Bauman, 1992:54,81,187). In this light, we might consider Antcliffe's view of the social sciences as

> those branches of knowledge which ... have some bearing on the actions and manners of nations and races and so build up, or pull down in preparation for rebuilding, our social systems (1932:405).

Look to the future ...

Modernity breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition, replacing it with much larger impersonal organisations. An orientation towards the past, characteristic of traditional cultures, is replaced by an orientation towards the future - a process closely linked with the switch from oral to written communication which, in high modernity, eventually leads towards the globalisation of experience (Giddens, 1991:24-33).

... but don't forget the 'past'

Yet an important aspect of the modern project is the 'use of history to make history', as the systematic appropriation of the past to help shape the future. An example can be found in the 'heritage' industry, where a selective and sanitised view of the past is commodified and remarketed, 'in a token and cellophane-packaged form' (Gellner, 1983:121), as tourist experiences. This historicity drives modern social life away from the hold of tradition by using knowledge about the past as a means of breaking with it, thereby orienting us primarily towards the future (Giddens, 1990:21,50;1991:17).

So whilst such organisations as the National Trust or the Folk Song Society, both of which originated in the 1890s, might appear as symptomatic of a reaction against modernity, or at least breaks in the direction of change, they are instead as much its products as the nuclear power industry or NASA are accepted to be. The founding in 1895 of the National Trust, for instance, with the intention of securing 'the permanent preservation of places and buildings of 'beauty' and of 'historic' interest - that is, to sustain the national heritage in its physical and geographical aspects' (Doyle, 1986:95) - was no more than part of the ordering process.

For Bauman, the 'shared vision of modern history as a movement with a direction' was integral to modernity, in the same way that its absence is characteristic of what he terms postmodernity (1992:188).

The ambivalence of modernity

Writers such as Bauman emphasise the ambivalent nature of modernity ([*see especially*] 1991). For instance, the popularity of countryside-based activities such as cycling and rambling, the weekend recourse to 'nature' after the working week spent in the office or factory, can be seen as on the one hand an expression of anti-modern sentiment. Yet on the other, such recreation might be considered to buttress modernity through becoming, in this sense, integral to its continuance, by making work more tolerable through providing relief from it. Again, in seeking out in remote areas what was believed to be the spirit of 'Old England', the urban ramblers were ironically here instead acting as agents - like the wireless, cinema or better transport facilities - of the same modernity from which they were supposedly escaping (Trentmann, 1994:595).

Richards points to the second half of the nineteenth century as the time in which advertising created 'a truly national commodity culture' which became the 'focal point' of all representation and the modern world. The 'ideology of England', a national identity embodied in such phenomena as the monarchy, imperial expansion, and boundaries between classes and genders, representing 'an imaginary way of relating to the real world', was discovered to be the 'best way' of selling commodities (1991:1,5,251). In this manner, cultural and commercial life became inextricably interlinked, as everything, including features such as the countryside, became commodities to be enjoyed.

From this perspective, the activities of people such as Cecil Sharp - who will feature prominently in this dissertation - or William Morris can be seen as attempts to shape modernity, rather than overcome it. Guided by the twin concerns of nation and history, Sharp in particular was determined to 'restore a spiritual tie between modern reality and the rural past'. It would not be until the 1930s that individuals such as Gardiner, characterised by their 'anti-intellectual' stance, would preach a return to the land based on an outright rejection of modernity and the 'mere palliatives' of garden cities and rural walks which were associated with it (Trentmann, 1994:598,602,610-612).

Tradition itself can never be wholly static, since it must be reinvented, or at least reappropriated, by each new generation as it inherits its cultural heritage from the preceding one. But under conditions of modernity, a practice cannot be sanctioned on the simple grounds of its being traditional. Tradition can be justified, 'but only in the light of knowledge which is not itself authenticated by tradition ... justified tradition is tradition in sham clothing', receiving its identity only from the reflexivity of the modern. This ensures that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those same practices, thereby constitutively altering their character (Giddens, 1990:37-8).

The ordered society

> *The first need of any society is order* ... (Manchester Education Aid Society, 1868; [*quoted in*] Ascherson, 20.10.1996).

For Bauman, the overriding rationale of modernity was the imposition of order and structure on an inherently chaotic world, in the creation of an 'essentially ordered totality' which would hold no place for the local or particular. Order and chaos provided the only alternatives: what was not one must necessarily be the other. Since order could only be man-made, and in consequence an artificial imposition on nature, it would be always vulnerable. So the main and distinguishing feature of modernity is the constant supervision and policing which this condition would necessitate.

> The discovery that order was not natural was discovery of **order as such**. The **concept** of order appeared in consciousness only simultaneously with the **problem** of order, of order as a matter of **design** and **action**, order as an obsession. To put it yet more bluntly, order as a problem emerged in the wake of the ordering flurry, as a reflection on ordering practices (1991:6).

The intellectual as 'agent of order'

Intellectuals, for whom knowledge meant power, would be licensed as the agents of order, ruling over the field of culture: science, education, the arts. The world would be guided by man-made values and norms, and reproduced through the ongoing process of learning and teaching. The unlicensed, meanwhile, would be correspondingly powerless (1987:3,4; 1991:4,6,7,38; 1992:xi-xvi,2,99).

Modernity can therefore be thought of as a time when order, in terms of 'the world, of the human habitat, of the

human self, and of the connection between all three - is reflected upon; a matter of thought, of concern, of a practice that is aware of itself, conscious of being a conscious practice and wary of the void it would leave were it to halt or merely relent' (1991:5).

Modernity acknowledged the essential artificiality of the social order, and the inability of society to attain an orderly existence on its own. It further recognised that the establishment of the social order requires what Bauman terms 'the asymmetrical distribution of agency', incurring the division of society 'into actors and the objects of their actions' (1991:99). Modernity is both 'effected and sustained' by design, manipulation, management and engineering. Resourceful sovereign agencies 'claim and successfully defend the right to manage and administer existence: the right to define order and, by implication, lay aside chaos, as that left-over that escapes the definition' (1991:7).

The term 'intellectual' was applied to a nebulous and 'motley collection' who might include novelists, poets, artists, journalists, scientists and other public figures, constituted as a combined effect of mobilisation and self-recruitment, rising above the confines of their own occupation to function as 'men of knowledge', 'embodying and practising the unity of truth, moral values and aesthetic judgment'. They held in common the feeling that it was both their moral responsibility and collective right 'to interfere directly with the political process through

influencing the minds of the nation and moulding the actions of its political leaders'. The decision to join in a particular mode of activity determines the dividing line between intellectuals and non-intellectuals. Consequently, definitions of the intellectual tend to be self-definitions, formulated on the basis of exclusion (1987:1,2,8).

With justification, however, Bourdieu has drawn attention to the problematic nature of self-ascription: 'Do I just say, 'I call 'intellectual' all those who say that they are 'intellectuals'?' (1992:43). Conversely, embarrassment about the very notion of the 'intellectual' in the educated English middle classes has led those who function in the manner outlined above to shy away from employing it (Turner, 1992:195).

The intellectual as 'legislator '

The key function of the intellectual in the modern era is characterised as that of 'legislator'. This consists of

> making authoritative statements which arbitrate in controversies of opinions and which select those opinions which, having been selected, become correct and binding. The authority to arbitrate is in this case legitimised by superior (objective) knowledge to which intellectuals have a better access than the non-intellectual part of society (Bauman, 1987:4,5).

> Intellectuals become the 'collective owners of knowledge of direct and crucial relevance to the maintenance and perfection of the social order'. Like the intellectuals themselves, this knowledge is extra-territorial, since it is not bound by localised or communal tradition. It has universal validity, and can be used in

the assessment of belief as held in other sections of society (Bauman, 1987:4,5).

'Universality', in this context, was understood by the legislators of cultural ideology to represent 'the exceptionless rule of one set of laws on the territory over which their sovereignty extended' (1993:8). Renewed attempts were made to correctly resolve, in a universally binding way, the questions of truth, judgment and taste. In this respect, the continuity of the modern enterprise was not only inherent, but legitimised by both history and reason, and backed by social, economic and political reality (1992:12-13,96).

The minority knowledge of 'intellectuals', as both 'experts', and 'legislators' in matters of truth, judgment and taste, was transformed into the bureaucratic power which became an indispensable part of the modern state's reproductive mechanism (1992:15-16). It was justified on the grounds of reason, ethical norms, aesthetic standards, and, in international terms, legitimised by power and strength (1992:19-20,96):

> There is one feature common to all classes and strata of modern society. Their collective portraits are always painted by the same artists: the intellectuals. In painting such portraits, the intellectuals have inevitably applied their own standards of beauty or ugliness (1987:172).

On this basis, what passes for 'truth' is

> ... a **social relation** (like **power, ownership** or **freedom**): an aspect of a hierarchy built of superiority-inferiority units; more precisely, an aspect of the hegemonic form of domination or of a bid for domination-through-hegemony. Modernity was, from its inception, such a form and such a bid (1991:232).

Culture or horticulture: the intellectual's 'garden'

Gellner (1983:50) draws a distinction between 'wild' cultures which 'reproduce themselves from generation to generation without conscious design, supervision, surveillance or special nutrition', and 'cultivated' or 'garden' cultures, which will not flourish without the benefit of this attention. Bauman sees the emergence of modernity as the transformation of the former into the latter, as European culture-gardeners, having displaced the 'gamekeepers' of the ruling class who had previously held sway, built fences around their plots. The redefinition of social order, not as beyond human control, but as a product of human agency which this incurred was 'by far the most important milestone on the road to modernity'. It also incurred an acknowledgement of the new responsibility of the centralised power of the state for the maintenance and reproduction of social order. This was particularly the case since the Enlightenment had demonstrated that assistance from any deity in this direction should not be expected. The process was completed in north-west Europe by the early nineteenth century, whereupon it became the pattern that, it was intended, should be followed by the rest of the world (1987:51-53,75).

As modern science resulted from the determination to subordinate Nature to human needs, so the wild culture of pre-modern times was to be replaced by the artificial garden culture of modernity. The rule of the knowledgeable was accordingly consolidated in a new structure of

domination. The populace was split into useful plants, worthy of encouragement, and weeds, who were not. Most importantly, both of these categories had now been cast as objects of action.

In a parallel process, whereby wild nature became associated with disorder, and viewed as something to be subordinated and remade, those who lacked education and lived close to nature were seen as hostile to both social order and reason. So the poor became the 'dangerous' classes, their 'wild' culture was delegitimised, and in the interests of social stability they became the objects of guidance and instruction on the part of the cultural gardeners who depend on the others for their self-assertion.

All visions of artificial order are by necessity 'inherently asymmetrical and thereby dichotomising', since they split the human world into 'a group for whom the ideal order is to be erected, and another which enters the picture and the strategy only as a resistance to be overcome'. The 'Other', as represented by the weeds and other waste, is 'the left-over of classificatory endeavour', having no meaning beyond 'someone's refusal to tolerate them' (1987:58-67;1991:7,14,20,38,39,100).

It should be mentioned that the imagery adopted by Gellner has been in use for some considerable time. Cecil Sharp, for instance, did no more than follow a well-established tradition in differentiating between the song as a 'genuine wild flower' or 'folk-song', and the 'garden

escape' of the art song which has found currency among the 'common people' (Sharp, 1907:8; Kidson, 1908:23). Indeed, Cox notes that the folk song as the wild flower of nature was 'one of Sharp's favourite analogies' (1990:91): through Engel, who had likened national songs to 'the wild flowers indigenous to a country, which thrive unaided by art' (1866:23), it could be traced back to the German Romantics.

Bauman suggests that 'In the beginning, 'culture' stood ... for the intention and the practice of 'gardening' as a method of ruling society', but was adapted 'to serve as the master metaphor for the new mechanisms of social reproduction - both designed and centrally operated' (1987:94). He cites Frederick the Great, who, at the 'threshold' of the modern era, expressed surprise at the attention given to the cultivation of exotic plants when comparatively little care was given to the human race.

> Whatever people say, a human being is more valuable than all the pineapples in the world. He is the plant we must breed, he deserves all our trouble and care, for he is the ornament and the glory of the Fatherland ([*quoted in*] 1991:27).

Certainly, the basic tension between the anthropological and elitist meanings of culture can be traced back at least to Herder (Jay, 1984:112), though it is also the case that the meaning of words such as 'culture' and 'civilisation' tend to be specific to the society in which they are used (Elias, 1978:5).

The destruction of popular culture in the early modern era meant that people could be re-formed in accordance with the requirements of the managed society. This, for Bauman,

was the rationale for the introduction of mass education, which represented:

> a desperate attempt to regulate the deregulated, to introduce order into social reality which had been first dispossessed of its own self-ordering devices. With popular culture and its power bases in ruins, education was a necessity (1987:69).

Garden cultures were equated with civilization. The peaceful and ordered society must be achieved by civilising its members: and, in the process, eradicating the wild cultures based on local and traditional patterns of life. The main purpose of education would not so much be the overcoming of ignorance as to teach both discipline and obedience to superiors. This was the major requirement of the citizens of a planned, designed and rationalised society, distinguished as it was from all past powers by its unprecedented scope, depth of penetration, and ambition. It was the state which was to be enlightened; in the achievement and reinforcement of an orderly and uniform society, the subjects were merely to be contained and prevented from rebelling against their fate. They were accordingly reconstructed as a problem for social policy, since nonconformity served as an indicator of the non-completion of the task of order-building and the vulnerability of order (1987:73-77,91-93;1991:104-105).

<u>New problems, new solutions: the momentum of modernity</u>

Although Bauman recognises that the sovereignty of the modern state is 'the power to define and to make the definitions stick', the fragmentation of the world into a 'plethora of problems' in pursuit of the grand vision is

what makes it manageable. As problems are solved, new ones are created. Ordering reveals new areas of chaos, which are needed to go on creating order: the dynamism of progress is located largely in 'the obsolescence of yesterday's solutions'. In consequence modernity is, first and foremost, a 'frontier civilisation', which can only survive as long as some frontier is still left to vanquish. It is assumed that Bauman uses the term not only in a geographical sense, but figuratively as well: the frontiers of order can be discerned in many facets of everyday life. So '[t]he war against chaos splits into a multitude of local battles for order', with 'guerilla units' of intellectuals doing the fighting. Moreover, '[f]or most of modern history there were no headquarters to co-ordinate the battles - certainly not commanders-in-chief able to chart the whole vastness of the universe to be conquered and to mould local bloodshed into a territorial conquest. There were only the mobile propaganda squads ...' (1991:8-10,12-14;1994:12).

By extension, and importantly for this study, the guerilla/legislators are necessarily preceded by pioneers, who explore and map out the territory which is to be overcome. Although Bauman does not refer to them directly, their presence is clearly implicit. It is delineated more clearly in the work of Miroslav Hroch, and we shall consider this aspect of it shortly.

Modernity and the nation-state: homogeneity and its absence

Nationalism functions primarily as a political principle, holding that the political and national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983:1). As 'an ideology which claims supreme loyalty from individuals for the nation', it can therefore be seen as a direct consequence of the ordering of modernity, resulting from the interplay of political, economic and cultural factors (Kellas, 1991:6,35-36). Consequently, 'it does not know national boundaries, merely national peculiarities' (Trentmann, 1994:614).

In Gellner's analysis, it was nationalism, rather than internationalism, which was fostered by industrialisation. The maximisation of economic growth in the wake of industrialisation was dependent on changes to both cultural life and state structure. Diversity could not be accommodated in the putative nation-state. Instead, homogeneity was to be promoted through a system of mass education which would provide all with a common high culture. Centralised authority in the state structure - which Elias (1982) believed to have developed as a parallel process - was also a prerequisite in the emergence of the nation-state. Nationalism was thus integral to, or the norm for, modernity, since it 'has very deep roots in our shared current condition, is not at all contingent, and will not easily be denied' (1983:56).

This analysis is similar to that offered by Hall, except that - in Kellas' view - Gellner's explanation for

the rise of nationalism is 'fundamentally economic', in so far as the development of industrial society provides the initial impetus for the process. Social and political factors are accordingly reduced, in some degree, to economic interests. However Gellner differs from Marxists in seeing nationalism as the concomitant of any type of industrialisation, rather than making nationalism dependent on capitalism as such (Kellas, 1991:36,41-44).

Where the centre was unable to sweep away local cultures or ethnicities, and the development of a homogeneous nation impeded, nationalist activity might develop. This is particularly likely to occur on the fringes of a state. Once the agrarian stage has - at least partially - been left, conditions are favourable for the establishment of a high culture which is independent from that offered by the centre, and from which may develop a political infrastructure: 'every high culture now wants a state, and preferably its own' (Gellner, 1983:51). This eventuality, however, is conditional upon the prior development of a high culture, which must be created by the intellectuals from the new middle classes. Perhaps ironically, in this instance the idea of a 'nation' comes from the intellectuals, to be imposed on the 'people' with whom they choose to identify.

This is put more forcefully by Bauman, who contends that unlike a tribe, the nation-state extends its rule over a territory before it claims the obedience of the people who live on it. The 'collectivisation of friendship', as

the desired result, is dependent on the operation of indoctrination and force, the 'artifice of legally construed reality', and the 'mobilization of solidarity with an imagined community ... The national state redefines friends as natives ...' (1991:63-64).

In the cultivation of sentiments which are otherwise unlikely to grow, the legislator-intellectuals

> ... laud and enforce the ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural homogeneity. They are engaged in incessant propaganda of shared attitudes. They construct joint historical memories and do their best to discredit or suppress such stubborn memories as cannot be squeezed into shared tradition - now redefined, in the state-appropriate quasi-legal terms, as 'our common heritage'. They preach the sense of common mission, common fate, common destiny. They breed, or at least legitimise and give tacit support to, animosity towards everyone standing outside the holy union. In other words, nationalism promotes uniformity. Nationalism is a religion of friendship; the national state is the church which forces the prospective flock to practice the cult. The state-enforced homogeneity is the practice of nationalist ideology (1991:64).

The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch devised a model to account for the development of small East European nations. This comprises three main phases, each of which must be successfully concluded before the next can take place: first, the period of scholarly interest in the folklore and history of the native population - without, at this stage, any notion of trying to 'awaken' a national consciousness; second, the period of patriotic agitation, for the purpose of spreading a national consciousness: and the rise of a mass national movement (Raun and Plakans, 1990:133). The transmission and cultivation of certain attitudes promoting

conscious commitment towards the national collectivity can therefore be seen as crucial (Hroch, 1985:183).

In the terms of this study, the first and second phases would be characterised as reflecting pioneer and legislator activity respectively.

Gramsci also recognised the central role of the intellectual in secessionist nationalism. He argued that since 'the people' are ill-equipped to define and advance their own interests, intense activity in the cultural domain is required on the part of the intellectuals in order to create a new consciousness, or 'counter-hegemony', which can be used to counter the ideological control of the coloniser (or centre). This will usually be achieved by drawing on the low or folk culture in order to create a high culture. Subsequent transmission to the wider population is dependent on the existence of some 'sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation' (1971:418), which can be used to promote

> ... the attainment of a 'cultural-social' unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world ... (1971:349).

So the alien culture is replaced not by the old local culture, but a new shared culture which has been created to hold together the putative nation. We need to look no further than Ireland for an example.

<u>Eire: the creation of a 'nation'</u>

In the early years of this present century, W.B. Yeats was engaged with the problem of unifying the Anglo-Irish

and the 'people-nation' (Cairns and Richards, 1988:66) in the nationalist cause. Yeats believed that 'it was precisely by looking to the past that the poet served the present' (1988:69); a strategy which Gellner would describe as 'the nationalist manipulation of the past for current purposes' (1987:vii). Since religion had replaced language as 'the crucial factor' in determining ethnic allegiance (Coakley, 1990:439) in the Irish context, Yeats' aim was to remove from the notion of 'Celtism' any reference to its philological and ethnic roots, and reconstruct it in the 'more nebulous terms' (Cairns and Richards, 1988:67) which could permit the incorporation of the Anglo-Irish. A contemporary described this as 'one of the most glaring frauds that the credulous Irish people ever swallowed' (Moran [1905], [*quoted in*] 1988:68). It would be achieved by drawing together nationalism, Celtism and occultism in order that Yeats might reach his fellow countrymen and women on 'what he supposed to be a more fundamental level of their spirituality', mainly through by-passing the influence of the Roman Catholic Church (1988:68,71). Indeed, George Russell commented in 1898 that Irish nationalism was beginning to be felt 'less as a political movement than as a spiritual force' ([*quoted in*] 1988:70).

The legislator in Britain

Despite Turner's observation that the situation in England has been characterised in the educated middle classes by 'a deep embarrassment about the very notion of the intellectual, let alone an intelligentsia' (1992:195),

Heyck considers the intellectuals of late-Victorian Britain to have been 'a self-conscious, distinct group with common attitudes of superiority, aloofness and detachment', collectively forming a 'quasi-class' (1982:11).

For Szczelkun, the legislative role of intellectuals has operated as a direct function of their class position. In presenting the values and traditions of the dominant culture as 'intrinsically and universally superior', and the embodiment of 'an excellence, rationality and taste which is beyond reproach', both the culture, and, implicitly, the intellectual capacity of the working class are undervalued. The true function of what is referred to as 'good taste', he concludes, is 'to obscure and camouflage the mechanics of class oppression'. This effect was compounded by the fact that 'socialism' had been taken over by 'a series of well-heeled leaders who interpreted the 'elevation' of the working classes almost entirely in terms of their own values', which were assumed to be universal achievements representing universal standards of excellence. The 'Rational Recreation' movement is but one expression of this phenomenon whereby 'culture' was used to maintain the status quo (1993:1,9,117; [*see also*] Waters, 1990:3-8). Cultural capital could be utilised in both prescribing what was 'good' for the lower orders, whilst keeping an appropriate distance from them (Heywood et al, 1989:298-301).

In consequence, and (at least ostensibly) acting from the best of motives, intellectuals could operate in the

interests of class oppression without necessarily being aware of what this implied. In his study of three influential figures - William Morris, Cecil Sharp and Clough Williams-Ellis - Szczelkun claims to recognise that 'Their sincere efforts to contribute to a better world were dwarfed and negated by the undertow of their unconscious class values'. In Sharp's case,

> ... he took a romanticised, cleaned up, censored and edited version of a past rural culture and represented it as the ideal for a national song and dance. He presented these ideas through the burgeoning institutions of mass education. All that did not fit his model was castigated and denounced. In this way the least threatening aspects of working class culture were selected and made into a British standard (1993:3).

Cecil Sharp's activities as a legislator will receive detailed consideration in subsequent chapters.

Ordered culture: the legacy of legislator action

It is in this regard that we must consider Hobsbawm and Ranger's views on the revival of traditions. Once material such as folk song has fallen into disuse, its subsequent revival and relocation in a different cultural context as part of an invented tradition has the effect of transforming it from 'old' to 'new'. As part of an invented tradition incorporating other elements such as national symbols and national history, folk-song is incorporated in an exercise in social engineering which, despite claims to the contrary, is 'often deliberate and always innovative, if only because historical novelty implies innovation' (1983:7-9,13).

In a similar vein, Williams advocates that rather than

being accepted as residual aspects of archaic social structures, traditions should instead be seen as features of contemporary social and cultural organisation. As such, he believes, they are used hegemonically as a 'selective tradition' which provides an 'historical and cultural ratification' in perpetuating the dominance of a particular class (1977:116).

Modern culture and civilisation were characterised by the three main traits of optimism, universalism and ethnocentrism, which extended beyond all national and social distinctions (Bauman, 1987:95). Its 'objectively' conceived aesthetic could not, for instance, accommodate the ancient Indian classical music tradition, which Engel dismissed as one which

> ... cannot be considered to exist as an art aesthetically cultivated like our own. The song of the Hindu of rank will serve, therefore, as a specimen of Hindu National music just as well as that of the lowest Cooly ... (1866:3).

Consequently, the superiority of modernity in subordinating, marginalising or even annihilating its pre-modern alternatives went largely unquestioned. Its eventual ascendancy was assured. Since it was viewed - in terms of the doctrines of 'progress' and evolution - as the highest point of development, all other cultures were measured in terms of their distance from it. But since no outside vantage point was available as a frame of reference for the perception of modernity, it was both self-referential and self-validating (Bauman, 1987:115,116).

The view from beyond

Throughout the modern era, matters of taste and artistic judgment were legislated upon by aestheticians operating the mechanisms which transformed uncertainty into certainty, exercising monopolistic power over the field of art (1987:134). It now appears evident that the validity of an aesthetic judgment depends on the site from which it has been made and the authority ascribed to that site. In consequence, the authority of the aesthetician can no longer be taken for granted as impartial (1987:137). The goals of modernity, such as absolute truth, pure art, humanity as such, order, certainty, and harmony, are now likened to the horizon which can never be reached (1991:10).

> Modernity is what it is - an obsessive march forward ... [which] must go on because any place of arrival is but a temporary station. No place is privileged, no place better than another, as from no place the horizon is nearer than from any other (1991:10-11).

In the end, '[t]he linear time of modernity is stretched between the past that cannot last and the future that cannot be' (1991:11).

What Bauman terms the 'power/knowledge syndrome', as 'a most conspicuous' attribute of modernity, had its origins in the Enlightenment (or early modern) era, and derived from two novel developments which took place at that time. These were, firstly, 'the emergence of a new type of state power with the resources and will necessary to shape and administer the social system according to a preconceived model of order', and secondly 'the

establishment of a relatively autonomous, self-managing discourse able to generate such a model complete with the practices its implementation required'. In combination, Bauman believes, these two developments 'created the kind of experience which was articulated in the particular world-view and associated intellectual strategies to be given the name of 'modernity''.

The subsequent perceived divorce between the state and intellectual discourse has contributed to the end of that same era, characterised as it was by blind arrogance, high-handedness and legislative dreams (1987:2;1991:17).

Postmodernity

> reverses the signs of the values central to modernity, such as uniformity and universalism ... Postmodernity is modernity reconciled to its own impossibility - and determined, for better or worse, to live with it. Modern practice continues - now, however, devoid of the objective that once triggered it off (1991:98).

At the same time, the domination of intellectuals as arbiters of taste in cultural matters - such as literature, the visual arts, music - was effectively challenged by the market. As it became integrated into the sphere of market-led consumption, the ideological function of culture was challenged, and ultimately supplanted, by that of entertainment: a person's role as consumer became more important than that of subject of the state (1992:17).

This is the point at which the arbiters or managers of taste and values - philosophers, literary theorists, musicologists, aestheticians - bemoan the perceived loss of a community-sustained 'folk' culture, as the expression of

'natural' and 'spontaneous' cultural processes, to an artificially produced 'popular' culture which is castigated as brash, undiscerning and crude. Cultural uniformity becomes less attractive to the intellectuals as it is realised that, largely because of market forces, agencies beyond their control are to set its standards and oversee its implementation; thereby in the process undermining their own legislative function. As the 'arch-enemy' of uniformity, the market has the effect of promoting diversity, rather than stifling it. By the end of the twentieth century the notion that some cultural expressions are inherently 'better' or 'superior' has been discarded in favour of 'variety' and 'coexistence'. All have intrinsic value and are worthy of preservation. Eventually - and ironically - intellectuals direct their attention to the protection and maintenance of this new pluralistic diversity of cultural values created by commercial interests (1992:16-18,35,52). 'Once bent on the annihilation of 'crude, superstitious, ignorant, bestial' folkways, they now bewail the enforced transformation of the 'true folk culture' into a 'mass' one' (1992:101).

'Legislator' to 'interpreter'

The role of the intellectual changes from legislator to that of interpreter, whereby the study of culture becomes 'an essentially hermeneutic enterprise' (1992:21,23). It is no longer possible to pronounce on universal standards of truth, judgment and taste, which are recast as ethnocentricity and the imposition of a western

mode of life (1992:20,96). Instead, understanding is sought. Even then, 'Understanding is not, in fact, superior understanding ... It is enough to say that we understand in a different way, if we understand at all' (Gadamer, [*quoted in*] Bauman, 1992:129). So

> The vision of culture as, essentially, an activity performed by a part of the population and aimed at the other part, is replaced with a vision of a spontaneous process devoid of administrative or managerial centres, free of an overall design and perpetuated by diffusely deployed powers (1992:23).

Culture is no longer seen as something to be 'made' or 'remade': it is instead a reality in its own right (Bauman, 1992:23).

Perhaps somewhat contentiously, the 'community' is identified as 'the central concept of the self-consciously post-modern philosophy and social science'. Intellectuals interpret between communities, but legislate within them, albeit in the more limited role of adjudicators or arbitrators. Communities (which, in this sense, might include nations) are 'products of a differentiating and separating action' on the part of intellectuals (1987:145-147).

Bauman believes that the essence of both the distinction and discontinuity between 'modern' and 'postmodern' is to be located in legislative and interpretative strategies as a reflection of the changing social position and function of the intellectuals (1992:23,115). If postmodernity is to be characterised as a waning of certainty and the consequent collapse of any

structure which permits the notion of domination of a hierarchy of values, then

> Modernity is reconstructed ex-post-facto as an era possessing the selfsame features the present time feels most poignantly as missing, namely the universal criteria of truth, judgement and taste seemingly controlled and operated by the intellectuals (1992:24)

Looked at in this way, the contemporary reorientation of cultural discourse derives directly from the changing experience of intellectuals as they attempt to re-establish their social function in a world which can no longer accommodate their traditional role (1992:24,93-94,204). So the concepts of modernity and post-modernity 'stand for two sharply different contexts in which the 'intellectual role' is performed', and the distinct strategies which develop in response to them (1987:3).

It is only the onset of the post-modernist debate that has permitted a view of the modern era as a closed episode, a completed phase of history. The confidence of the modern era has been dissipated with its conclusion. Although there are similarities and continuities, they are outweighed, for Bauman, by the differences. This is particularly so in relation to acceptance of the general direction taken by modernity: rather than one to be followed, it is now viewed as an 'aberration', a 'false track', a 'historical error' (1987:117). So

> It is perhaps debatable whether the philosophers of the modern era ever articulated to everybody's satisfaction the foundations of the objective superiority of Western rationality, logic, morality, aesthetics, cultural precepts, rules of civilised life, etc. The fact is, however, that they never stopped looking for such an

> articulation and hardly ever ceased to believe that the search would bring - must bring - success. The post-modern period is distinguished by abandoning the search itself, having convinced itself of its futility (1987:119-120).

The construct of supposedly self-evident certainties which pertained in the modern era, such as the superiority of white to black, man to woman, high culture to low, rich to poor, cultured to uneducated, and so on *ad infinitum*, is, paradoxically, held by Bauman to have held the seeds of its own demise. These certainties only made sense as a total construct, manifestations of the same power complex, interdependent and credible only as long as the structure remained intact. The resistance and struggle of categories cast as inferior - by both the power structure and value hierarchy - chipped away at this structure to provide a current situation where Bauman feels confident in asserting that '[a]ll these 'evidencies' are now gone. Not a single one remains unchallenged' (1987:120).

In their search for a universal standard, intellectuals destroyed 'folk culture' and the communities in which it had been embedded. Bauman suggests that it is only when they suffer a decline in influence resulting from the collapse of this same elitist construction that they champion and idealise 'the people'. That culture which legislators had previously excluded from their orbit now offers a refuge for the contemporary interpreter:

> Exempt from elitist cultural control, the descendants of the yesterday ignorant, superstitious primitives, suddenly became the carriers of value to be defended against 'mediocre' culture (1987:161-2).

'Pioneer' and 'legislator': their relationship reviewed

The question necessarily arises as to whether the theoretical basis exists for positing some generic distinction between the 'pioneer' and the 'legislator'. In other words, is the pioneer simply a particular type of legislator? Indeed, could the same individual fulfil both functions?

In figuratively ascribing the expansion of the frontiers of legislator influence to the activity of 'guerillas' and 'mobile propaganda squads', Bauman fails to make any specific provision for the pioneer function. Hroch, on the other hand, clearly specifies a period of 'scholarly interest' in the folklore and history of the native population as a necessary precursor of activity undertaken with the purpose of spreading a national consciousness. I have already categorised these distinct phases as respectively characteristic of 'pioneer' and 'legislator' involvement.

Since 'scholarly interest' would appear to equate with antiquarian activity, we can perhaps instead in this instance refer to the pioneer as an antiquarian. But that gets us little further, for we have simply changed the question, and must now instead ask whether the antiquarian is some sort of legislator. To the extent that antiquarians set the context for subsequent legislative activity by determining and refining the nature of their discourse, the answer would necessarily appear to be in the affirmative.

The boundaries between pioneer and legislator are not

always clear cut. We can nevertheless qualify this pioneer legislator status - and should, perhaps, introduce a new category of proto-legislator - principally on account of the antiquarian's characteristic orientation towards the past. This, after all, provides the basis for differentiation between Hroch's first two phases; the past-oriented pioneer represents the first, whilst the future-oriented activist legislator, shaping modernity by adapting and exploiting the material gathered by their precursors, characterises the second.

Backward or forward looking orientation in relation to the appropriate cultural material therefore provides the key, and this central distinction is fundamental to the discussion which follows.

It must nevertheless be conceded that there is no reason why a legislator should not first pioneer a particular field of cultural activity. Such a legislator would be catered for by Bauman's category of 'guerilla'.

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This chapter has examined the major components which constitute the theoretical construct of the project of modernity, and indicated the nature of the connections which are to be made between modernity, nationalism and folk-song.

In *Chapter 3*, which follows, we begin to examine the empirical evidence which can establish the foundations of Kidson's subsequent recognition as a pioneer.

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Chapter 3: PIONEERS, PUBLISHERS AND COLLECTORS

> *"Come, Watson, come!" he cried. "The game is afoot"* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Abbey Grange* [1904]: Conan Doyle, 1928:833).

Pioneer activity in mapping out a particular field of activity is a prerequisite of the legislator's entry to it. Through chronicling his participation in the construction of a history of British printed music - itself central to the notion of musical '*Renaissance*' - this chapter establishes the basis of Kidson's pioneer authority. The twin themes of accuracy and collaboration underpin both that project and this chapter, where a network of fellow musical antiquarians is reconstructed.

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At the end of the twentieth century, Frank Kidson is remembered, if at all, as a 'pioneer'. This epithet is the one most frequently chosen to describe his activities by those working in the closely related fields of music history and folk-song.

Such a distinction might be seen as artificial, and was perhaps particularly so - as we shall see - through Kidson's eyes. Yet it has nevertheless become established and in consequence must, at least initially, be followed. Suffice to say, at this point, that Kidson is of interest to music historians as the author of *British Music Publishers* (1900); whilst as compiler of *Traditional Tunes* (1891), he is known to students of folk-song as a precursor of Cecil Sharp and the wider folk-song movement. The first of these elements forms the subject matter of this chapter.

Although he has achieved recognition as a pioneer in these two distinct fields of study - and leaving aside, for the moment, his work on the history of the Leeds pottery - Kidson's pioneering activities derive from the single source of his music collection. In simple terms, this collection provided the basis for his antiquarian research into the history of printed music, whilst at the same time offering a means of evaluating material gleaned from the oral tradition.

Yet in the field of music collecting in its printed form, and being only one among many active in the later nineteenth century, he was anything but a pioneer. We briefly consider music collecting in that era, and move on to the Kidson Collection itself, before examining the authoritative works which it helped to generate.

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> *... a man should keep his little brain attic stocked with all the furniture he is likely to use, and the rest he can put away in the lumber-room of his library, where he can get it if he wants it* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Five Orange Pips* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:116).

The Victorians were collectors: and they collected music, as so much else, on an unprecedented scale. There were 191 sales, by auction, of the property of music collectors between 1830 and 1900, almost half of which took place between 1871 and 1890. Since supply was necessarily finite, such a level of activity could not be sustained.

The situation was exacerbated with the entry to the market of both libraries and European and American collectors, who pushed prices to levels which made it

impossible for the scholar to purchase a large library for personal research. There simply were no longer enough manuscripts and early editions to satisfy everyone's requirements (Hyatt King, 1963:69-70).

Even in his particular specialisations, there were precursors to the Kidson Collection. For instance, the collector Jasper Joly had, in 1863, made a gift of over 6,000 items - mainly eighteenth century Irish and Scottish song books and country dances, together with some English and Welsh music, and ballad operas - to the National Library of Ireland. This gift was only part of a much larger general collection which Joly owned (1963:55).

The town of Dundee benefitted similarly from the generosity of Andrew John Wighton (1804-66), who bequeathed music, mainly of Scottish origin, to the Town Council (1963:56). Kidson would himself consult this collection in the preparation of *British Music Publishers* (1900).

The Origins of the Kidson Collection

> *A visit to Frank Kidson was at once an education and a joy. What a wonderful library he had! and wherever did all those volumes, ancient and modern, come from?* (Lightwood, 1927:205:7).

Although the origins of the Kidson collection are obscure, there is evidence to suggest that the library was begun by Frank Kidson's mother's brother. Ethel Kidson relates that her uncle's maternal grandfather Joseph Roberts had two children - Mary Roberts, Frank Kidson's mother, and John Roberts, his uncle.

Joseph Roberts was disappointed in Mary having married Frank Kidson's father, Francis Prince Kidson, against his

wish. He seems to have cut Mary off to fend for herself, and instead indulged John. He 'set to work to make a gentleman of John' ([?]1926:16), who was given a 'good' education, and then articled to a solicitor in Otley. However this 'idol of his father' ([?]1926:17) caught a cold whilst walking from Leeds to Otley, and died aged only twenty two.

Since the beneficiaries of his will would be her children rather than herself, Joseph Roberts seems not to have been reconciled with his daughter Mary. Yet, whilst Joseph was still alive, John's library came into the possession of Frank, her youngest child, and 'was his greatest treasure as a boy' ([?]1926:18).

In Ethel's - to all intents and purposes, an echo of Frank's - estimation, the library showed John to have been 'a young man of taste', for it contained 'fine editions of Scot[t], and early works of Fennimore Cooper and Marryat' ([?]1926:17-18). In later life, her uncle would frequently assert that his interest in folk-song had been fostered by reading Marryat's *Jacob Faithful* as a child [*see, for instance, his* letter to Lucy Broadwood, 24.11.1893], leading the *Musical Herald* to claim that Kidson had become 'one of the most notable pioneers in the domain of national and of folk-song' through the influence of this 'popular novelist' (01.08.1913:227).

Kidson read Scott 'over & over again' before his fifteenth year, developing a particular interest in the Jacobite rebellion. When his library consisted of 'about

five volumes', Hogg's *Jacobite Relics* had been 'a great addition'. This early interest appears to explain why an Englishman should win renown as an authority on Scottish music, with Scotsmen such as Moffat, Glen and Cook so prominent amongst his friends. Kidson had no time for partisan sentiment in music, asserting that 'I love <u>any</u> good tune whether Yorkshire, Scotch, Irish or English' (letter to Lucy Broadwood, 15.12.1893).

Francis Prince Kidson, Frank's father, found employment as a rate collector after the failure of his butcher's shop. As a man of some literary pretensions, he was likely to make additions to John Kidson's collection. Lucy Broadwood (1.1.1927) was convinced that Frank Kidson's 'antiquarian tastes [and] love of books' had been inherited from his father, who 'read much and collected a small library of uncommon books'.

Having read Broadwood's article, Ethel Kidson wrote to compliment the author, saying 'You are quite right, Uncle was brought up in a bookish house. 'Grandfather' loved books and was no mean poet' (04.01.1927).

The Kidsons were a family of collectors in a collecting age. Co-author with Frank of *Historical Notices of the Leeds Old Pottery* (1892), his brother - Lucy Broadwood (1.1.1927) misled a number of later writers (*for instance* Palmer, 1986[b]:150) through assuming him to be Frank's uncle - Joseph Roberts Kidson dealt in antique china in Leeds for many years. According to Walton, the shop was opened with the express purpose of disposing of a

large collection of Leeds pottery which the Kidsons had amassed (1970:vii); although *Kelly's Leeds Directory* for 1925 shows Joseph, assisted by his nephew Henry Prince Kidson, to have still then been in business at 116-8 Albion Street. In his own book on the subject Henry Edwin Kidson, Frank's eldest brother, who eventually settled in Liverpool (Walker Art Gallery, 1978), was similarly able to claim over forty years' experience in dealing in old china (Henry Kidson, 1908:*Prefactory*).

Frank was himself employed for a short time by Joseph, but his 'independent spirit' and 'passion for freedom' meant that he could never be 'the slave of any clock' (Ethel Kidson, 1926[?]:44-5). He left, with the aim of establishing himself in the more congenial occupation of landscape painter.

The Kidsons' *Historical Notices of the Leeds Old Pottery* would not be superseded until Donald Towner's *The Leeds Pottery* was published in 1963. In his *Introduction*, Peter Walton hoped that the reprint of Joseph and Frank Kidson's pioneering book would 'help to perpetuate the names of two men who did so much to promote the serious study of the Leeds Pottery' (1970:v,vii).

The earliest document available to us which can indicate the nature of Frank Kidson's own music collection is a manuscript entitled *A List of Songs and Music Books, Ballad Collections Belonging to Frank Kidson March 1886*. This takes the form of an inventory of over 220 items, showing titles, prices paid, and, for most entries, the

date of acquisition. The earliest date represented is 1880, against the entry for a folio collection of music which appropriately reads 'cheap Ed. of old songs my first'. There are relatively few entries for the years 1880-3, but 1884 seems to have seen the start of a more serious and sustained interest in collecting.

The following year Kidson updated this inventory of his collection in a notebook, on which he wrote: '*A Catalogue of Musical Works belonging to Frank Kidson Leeds compiled August 1887*'. The following analysis, using Kidson's division titles, provides a fair representation of the collection as it stood at that time:

English collections	82 items
Scotch collections	90
Welsh music	3
Irish music	8
Glees etc.	7
Sacred music	11
Children's songs	9
Country Dance collections	26
German music	12
French collections	6
Tutors for various instruments	19
Folio collections of songs	14
Bound folios of sheet music	Nos. 1-12, A-R, also a 'scrap folio'
Manuscript collections	books 1-13 and 5 others
Operas and plays	75

The reader should bear in mind that an 'item' might constitute several volumes. James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, for instance, is in six volumes, whilst *The Vocal Enchantress* of 1783 is in twelve.

Some of the manuscript collections, as Number 1, had been 'principally copied by my self'. Others were old ones which had been acquired. One such was Number 4, a

'collection written by A. Mary Waddilove, Deanery, Ripon, circa 1805-1810 in calf'.

Leaving aside the clues Kidson provided in his letter to Lucy Broadwood (24.11.1893), we can only guess at the criteria governing his overall purchasing policy. But what seems remarkable is the degree to which the collection already reflected the musical matters which would gradually come to prominence, thereby sustaining Kidson's writing career over the next forty years.

If Francis Prince Kidson was influential, as Broadwood (01.01.1927) suggests, in instilling a love of books in his son, it is also likely that his example made Frank and at least some of his brothers comfortable with the notion of writing for publication. *The Serpent* (1843-5), one of several large manuscript volumes of Francis Kidson's poetry now held in Leeds Central Library, contains newspaper cuttings of poems variously credited to the authorship of either FPK, or K. Their titles - clearly often inspired by contemporary events - include *Good in everything* (May 1853), *Alma* (12.12.1854), *The Brave Five Hundred* (22.06.1855), *Sebastapol* (12.09.1855), *Inkerman!* (nd), *The Wreck of the Royal Charter off Bangor, October, 1859* (19.11.1859), and *A Cottage Melody! For th' Yorksher Foaks: Be Wun or Thersells!* (nd). A volume of *Hebrew, Moslem, and Moorish melodies, with other poems* (1869) was published three years before his death. His youngest son would himself in due course become similarly responsible for 'a good deal of fugitive verse' (Graham, 1927:49).

The venture into print

Although Frank Kidson had already contributed work to *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture*, the series of thirty-two weekly articles entitled *Notes on Old Tunes* marked the start of his career as a writer on musical matters. These appeared in *The Leeds Mercury Supplement* from late 1886 into May 1887, between the compilation of the two listings referred to above. Christmas articles followed in 1888 and 1889, and the series of *Old Airs and Songs: Melodies Once Popular in Yorkshire* began in 1890, concluding with the thirty-second article on 9th. May 1891.

In the meantime, *Old English Country Dances* and *Traditional Tunes* had been issued, both at the author's expense, in editions of 80 and 200 copies respectively. If we include in this group of works the series of eight articles which appeared, uncredited, in *The Musical Times* between 1894 and 1897 as *New Lights Upon Old Tunes* - for which their author was more than content with payment of one guinea per page (letter to Lucy Broadwood, 14.10.1894) - we have the complete listing of works on which Kidson's pioneer status in the folk-song field is held to rest.

We will return to this aspect of his work in the next chapter. For the music historian, however, Kidson's seminal publication was to be his *British Music Publishers* (1900). For many years remaining 'the standard - in fact the only work on the subject', it would represent, in the opinion of more than one commentator, 'his most important literary undertaking' (Lightwood, 1927:8).

British Music Publishers

> *... he was the first to bring together in a co-ordinated form existing material, supplementing it by his own discoveries, and making it available for those to whom it was not only of interest, but also of inestimable value in the continuation of research* (William C. Smith, 1948:132).

Kidson asks in his *Preface* that 'As a pioneer work, the present volume must claim a little indulgence' (1900:v). Yet it would not be superseded until 1954, with the publication - clearly influenced by Kidson's example - of Humphries and Smith's *Music Publishing in the British Isles* .... As their own *Preface* noted:

> Frank Kidson's pioneer work, *British Music Publishers, Printers and Engravers, &c.*, issued in 1900, has long been out of print, and it is to be regretted that the author was unable to undertake a new edition incorporating the results of his later investigations ... [this book] has been inspired by the fine work of Kidson himself and is offered, it is hoped, as a worthy tribute to his memory (1954:ix).

Indeed, they go on to say that without the inspiration of Kidson's work 'it is hardly likely that the present volume would have been undertaken' (1954:41).

Ironically, Kidson's work might never have been published at all. An entry in the frontispiece of his manuscript *Dictionary of English Music Publishers*, from which *British Music Publishers* was developed, notes that the compilation was begun without intention to publish, but 'solely for my own use'. He nevertheless goes on to mention that 'Should the work ever be published I should have to ... rearrange the matter in a more uniform style'.

This he did. 'I am compiling a work for publication

dealing with the old London music printers and publishers, my plan includes provincial ones also' announced Kidson in the *Leeds Mercury* (26.03.1898).

In the following year the *Musical Times* noted the imminent issue of *British Music Publishers and the early music typographers* - as it was then styled - 'upon which the author has been engaged for many years' (01.05.1899:307). A newspaper cutting - annotated '*Leeds W Mercury* March 18' [?1899]), and pasted into the *Dictionary of English Music Publishers* - advertises the forthcoming publication of the book, deemed to be 'of much service not only to musical antiquaries, but to librarians, booksellers, and bibliographers'.

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About the time that work must have begun on the directory which would later become *British Music Publishers*, Kidson wrote a brief *Memoir of Thomas Fenteman*. Fenteman had been a dealer in pictures, books and works of art - including 'some hundreds' of paintings by the famous Leeds artist J.N. Rhodes - and 'the thousand and one things that go to the making up of an old curiosity shop' (Kidson, 23.7.1892, 6.8.1892).

It goes without saying that Kidson must have known Fenteman very well, despite the age difference of forty years. His shop was located in the same street as Joseph Kidson's, and it is hard to believe that its contents would not have exerted a powerful attraction. It was said at Fenteman's funeral that he had been 'a draughtsman of no

mean skill', who might have achieved 'the first rank' if he had applied himself to it ([?]1892:9). This doubtless provided another common bond between the two men.

However the importance of Fenteman in the present context is located in one of his 'chief works', namely the compilation, in a 'systematic manner', of 'a very complete' *Dictionary of Painters*. Even within a few days of his death Fenteman was still adding to this manuscript, 'as fresh information presented itself' ([?]1892:8).

It is not too fanciful to conclude that Fenteman's Dictionary might well have provided the inspiration and model for Kidson's, but in this instance applied to the field of music publishing rather than that of fine art. Yet Kidson failed to heed his own warning - implicit in this tribute to Fenteman - that a final definitive directory can never be completed.

Kidson achieved what Fenteman did not, namely the publication of his first edition. But he also would work on his directory for the rest of his life.

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> *They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains ... It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Study in Scarlet* [1887]: Conan Doyle, 1929:35).

On publication, *The Musical Times*' review of *British Music Publishers* noted that 'Mr. Frank Kidson, its author, has opened up quite an interesting field of musical literature'. Although Kidson's task had been 'an exceedingly difficult one', he had 'discharged it with a

painstaking zeal and conscientious thoroughness that call for full acknowledgement and high appreciation' (1900:239). Similar praise came from such diverse sources as *Musical Opinion Review* (01.05.1900), *The Londoner* (09.06.1900), *Library World* (July 1900), and the *Musical Herald* (July, 1900). It was also noted, however, that misprints and errors would inevitably appear in a work of this nature. But '[t]hese inevitabilities, a few of which we have noticed, will doubtless receive correction in a second edition' (*Musical Times*, 1900:239).

Demand for this revised edition certainly existed. 'Are you contemplating a new edition?' asked Dr. A.H. Mann, in his letter of 20 April 1907. Likewise, 'Are you bringing out a new ed. of your excellent *British Music Publishers*?' W.H. Grattan Flood still enquired a decade and a half later (letter 24.11.1921).

The intention was there also. In the *Notes and Queries* section of the *Musical Antiquary* of July 1911, Kidson mentioned that 'I hope at some time to bring out a new edition of *British Music Publishers*, in which much additional matter will appear' (1911:244). Two years later, the writer of a *Musical Herald* profile of Kidson noted that whilst 'Fresh light is thrown upon the history of music' by *British Music Publishers*, 'More light is constantly being revealed, and the 'correction copy' of the work which Mr. Kidson shows us is a very bulky volume' (1913:228).

There still exist a number of correction copies. Judging from the dates of the correspondence contained

within it (1904-1916), the 'very bulky volume' shown to the *Musical Herald*'s correspondent (1913:228) is that now held in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow (*British Music Publishers*, interleaved, M9533). Leeds Central Library holds part of an early revision entitled *British Music Printers and Publishers*, as well as the companion manuscript volumes of *English Provincial Music Publishers* and *Scotch and Irish Music Publishers*, which seem to be in a relatively advanced state of preparation. Newspaper cuttings and letters which they contain date these volumes to about 1916 to 1922 (SR 781.98 K541).

In an article on the Kidson Collection which appeared in *The Consort* of July 1950, Farmer mentions that Kidson's 'final revision of this work', in two quarto manuscript volumes, is to be found in Glasgow University Library, having been acquired from Ethel Kidson at his suggestion in 1948. He continues,

> It is now half-a-century since *British Music Publishers* was issued, and with all the knowledge which has accrued since then, plus what is contained in Kidson's own additions and rectifications in print and in manuscript, it is surely high time that a second edition of this important work were undertaken by some enthusiastic editor and enterprising publisher (1950:17).

This final revision could not be located when I visited Glasgow University Library in March 1995. A subsequent letter elicited the response that it still could not be traced, despite extensive enquiries. Nevertheless, they still hoped that it would 'turn up' (04.05.1995).

Over a year later, I was surprised to receive further

correspondence (03.07.1996) to the effect that the missing manuscript of Kidson's revision of his *British Music Publishers* had been found.

The work is certainly less than complete, and would remain so even if the *English Provincial Music Publishers* and *Scotch and Irish Music Publishers* volumes, currently in Leeds Library, were to be included with it, as I believe they should. The two quarto manuscript volumes referred to by Farmer cover only the letters A to H, and J to T respectively, although there is also a quantity of supplementary material, including a small volume entitled 'Ward to Zerbin' (Special Collections, Cb13-y.13-15).

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> *It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Case of Identity* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:62).

However often he attempted to make a fresh start, Kidson found it impossible to draw a line between the information he already possessed, and the mass of new information which was continually being revealed. This overriding concern for accuracy - he could never bring himself to publish anything which he knew to be factually incorrect - compelled Kidson to continually add revisions, with the unfortunate consequence that he was never able to treat any fair copy text as complete. He was overwhelmed by information, yet the technology which would have enabled him to process it effectively had yet to be developed.

The extensive amendments to the entry for Willis & Co., on page 21 of the 'Ward to Zerbin' volume can serve to

illustrate Kidson's dilemma. Willis's first name, which originally appeared as 'J. or I.', has been amended to read 'Isaac'. Other details, such as addresses and dates, have been changed, and a good deal of additional information included. Yet Willis was relatively obscure. As might be expected, the entries for more prominent figures, such as Playford (vol. J to T), display numerous amendments and insertions. Indeed, Playford's bibliography became so complex that Kidson abandoned his revisions in favour of constructing a new one: which extended to eighteen pages.

As well as adding and amending details of historical fact, Kidson also had to be aware of contemporary developments. Revisions to the text were required as fellow collectors died and their collections were broken up, necessitating a change to the past tense in references to Glen, Taphouse and other old friends.

Although the material in the University of Glasgow undoubtedly represents his last attempt to achieve a second edition of *British Music Publishers*, I somehow doubt that Kidson himself would have agreed with Farmer's description of it as a 'final revision'. In my estimation it is perhaps best thought of as representing the most advanced stage of a work in perpetual progress. In this sense the only finality attached to the work is that imposed by Kidson's death, which ironically occurred twenty seven years to the day after he had finished writing the first and only edition to be published (Kidson's MS inscription, vol. A-H).

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians

Looking back on this era, Hyatt King recognised that

> The truth is that, even without the Third Programme, high-fidelity recording and extra-mural lectures, the Victorian lover of music had often developed a much wider sense of its historical values than has hitherto been generally allowed (1963:69).

Grove's Dictionary demonstrates the veracity of this contention. In presenting a particular slant on musical history, the first edition (1879-89) had played a major part in the English musical renaissance through establishing that England had once been a musical nation - and, by implication, could be so again (Stradling and Hughes, 1993:21).

The great music collections should be viewed against this background. Rarity value was a result of collecting, rather than the inspiration behind it. As Elsner and Cardinal point out, collecting is dependent on prior classification. If classification acts as 'the mirror of collective humanity's thoughts and perceptions', then collecting is 'its material embodiment' (1994:2). It is the zeitgeist, 'the spirit and the sociocultural climate of an era', which determines the tastes, choices and styles which characterise it (Muensterberger, 1994:8).

Kidson's expertise in musical matters received recognition through the invitation to contribute entries to a new edition of *Grove's Dictionary*. The editor of this new edition was J.A. Fuller Maitland, who was to build on the foundations laid down by Sir Charles Grove. Fuller Maitland's interest in folk-song, Purcell and the Tudor

composers ensured that he was 'a dynamic voice within and on behalf of the Renaissance' (Stradling and Hughes, 1993:34).

He was also Lucy Broadwood's cousin. Kidson appears to have been in regular correspondence with Broadwood - another pioneer of the folk-song movement - by 1892, to judge by a letter which he sent to her on 14th. July of that year. Their friendship flourished, and 'I am very glad that you & your friends enjoyed your flying visit to us', he wrote on 14th. May 1893. Ethel Kidson would later recall this occasion, naming Lady Frances Legge and Fuller Maitland as other members of the party ([?]1926:76-7). It is no surprise then that Fuller Maitland should wish to draw on Kidson's possibly unique knowledge of British musical history.

This edition of the *Dictionary* comprised five volumes, which were issued volume by volume when completed. For some reason, Kidson does not seem to have been involved in the initial stages of this enterprise, since he contributed nothing under letter A of volume I. Items, such as 'Aird, James' and 'Astor & Co.', which he would presumably have preferred to appear here, are found instead in the Appendix to Volume V.

The Musical Herald would subsequently report that this edition of *Grove* contained 'no less than 365 greater or lesser contributions from 'F.K.'', relating mainly to 'matters of British Song and of musical antiquity' (01.08.1913:228).

Many of Kidson's entries concern music publishing. Although *British Music Publishers* had already been issued he continued to work in this area, as we have already noted. Research undertaken for both *Grove* and the projected revision of *British Music Publishers* could therefore be conducted in parallel - indeed there is considerable overlap between the two.

This similarity is accentuated when account is taken of the fact that there are entries in *Grove* for certain publishers not featured in *British Music Publishers* (for instance, Enoch and Sons (*Grove*, 1910:I:783-4)). In addition, some of Kidson's entries which at first glance may appear not to be about music publishing actually are so.

A case in point is Kidson's addition to the entry for the Austrian composer Ignaz Joseph Pleyel (1757-1831). He confines his contribution to Pleyel's dealings with the Edinburgh publisher George Thomson, who had engaged Pleyel to arrange a collection of Scottish songs (1910:III:775).

Much of the material Kidson used for his *Grove* entries had been obtained by correspondence. The Scottish collector Gavin Greig for instance mentioned to Lucy Broadwood that

> I had a note from Mr. Kidson a day or two ago asking about the official beginnings of F-S work in Scotland for a hasty addition to the proofs of 'Scottish Song', which he is revising & supplementing for the new *Grove* ... (letter, 29.11.1907).

Kidson also adopted a more systematic policy of sending questionnaires to publishing companies. They would fill in the relevant details, and this reply would provide

the basis of their *Grove* entry. An example, in the form of a completed questionnaire as returned by Enoch and Sons, may be found in *A Dictionary of English Music Publishers* in Leeds Central Library.

Succeeding editions of *Grove* retain the names of contributors under a particular entry as long as some part of their contribution continues to appear. Partly because the history of music publishers remains such an obscure area of research, Kidson's name can still be found in the *New Grove* (ed. Sadie) of 1980: for instance, under 'Cluer, John' (1980:I:502). Frank Kidson is still listed as one of the three contributors, whilst the bibliography for this entry is restricted to Kidson's *British Music Publishers* (1900) and Humphries and Smith (1954, 2/1970).

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The musical antiquarian *milieu*

From this discussion of his published works, the reader should have gained some indication of the extent of Kidson's research into the history of printed music, as well as an appreciation of the authoritative position amongst fellow musical antiquarians which he undoubtedly enjoyed.

Virtually ignored, hitherto, by historiography, these enthusiasts were united mainly by their common interest - evinced by their own collections - in musical minutiae of the past. Yet before attempting a reconstruction of this antiquarian network, it is first necessary to reflect on a significant obstacle to its satisfactory achievement.

Whilst examples of his own letters appear in a number of collections (such as, for instance, those of Broadwood, Gilchrist and Sharp in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library), there is no collection of the correspondence which Kidson himself received.

Apart from one copy letter from Sharp, dated 12th. July 1908 (in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library), and a letter from Dr. A.H. Mann, dated 15th. September 1921, which has found its way into volume II of the *Musical Antiquary* in Leeds Central Library, the only surviving correspondence sent to Kidson which I have been able to discover is whatever has been stored between the covers of the various correction copies of *British Music Publishers*.

Items have therefore generally been retained on account of the information which they contain. Either Kidson did not trouble to transcribe the information, or wanted to keep a record of its origin. Consequently the correspondence which remains is partial in the extreme, dealing solely with factual matters pertaining to Kidson's researches in musical history.

Reading these letters can be compared to listening to just one half of a conversation: the other part has to be guessed at. Often it is clear from the contents that the letter is in reply to a request for information. Sometimes the subject of the letter is barely hinted at, as the writer assumes understanding on the part of Kidson, as the instigator of this correspondence, which is not directly available to the researcher some hundred years later.

Over the years various friends and colleagues, such as for instance Annie Gilchrist and Lucy Broadwood, wrote to Kidson on numerous occasions. These letters are all now lost. If Kidson himself had kept them - and he might well not - they must have been destroyed after either his or Ethel's death.

The musical antiquarians and historians who are introduced in this chapter as colleagues of Kidson must therefore be treated as only a sample of a wider circle with whom he would probably have been in contact.

It has already been intimated that Kidson seems to have been as ready to ask for assistance as he would later be known for offering or granting it. I have a strong impression that this spirit of collaboration was characteristic of antiquarian endeavour. If the guiding principle was the accumulation of 'facts' about the past, collaboration seems the best way of marshalling those pieces which together could form what might have been regarded as the complete picture.

In his *Preface* to *English Music Publishers* (MS), Kidson had mentioned the difficulties imposed by his living 'away from London and any large library of musical works'. It is therefore not too surprising to subsequently discover in a footnote that 'The slips stuck in the book & signed W.B. are memoranda by Wm. Barclay Squire'. Barclay Squire worked in the British Museum, which had been steadily adding to its music collection throughout the nineteenth century, 'so that from an antiquarian point of view the

collection is now fully worthy the national position of the institution' (*Grove*, 1910:II,704).

Barclay Squire later produced his own *Catalogue of Printed Music ... in the British Museum* (1912), used as a companion volume to *British Music Publishers* by collectors and researchers. In the *Preface* to *British Music Publishers*, he was thanked 'for much helpful courtesy and the trouble he has taken in many ways' (1900:v).

It is worth bearing in mind that apart from visits to the British Museum and the Wighton Collection at Dundee public library, supplemented by visits to and information provided by his duly credited fellow antiquarians and collectors, Kidson produced *British Music Publishers* entirely from material contained in his own library.

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British Music Publishers was dedicated to 'My friend' Thomas William Taphouse: to the reviewer in *The Musical Times* this was entirely appropriate, since Taphouse was 'so typical an antiquary' (1900:239). Taphouse seems to have been a man of generous nature, having 'freely (as he has ever done) thrown open to me his large and valuable store of rare and unique volumes' (Kidson, 1900:v). J.E. Matthew would similarly note that '[t]he library of our friend Mr. Taphouse is known to many of us, thanks to the welcome he always extends to those interested in such matters' (1903:150).

Taphouse's collection comprised 2,000 books and various musical instruments, 'too numerous to enumerate in

detail' ('*Dotted Crotchet*', 1904:634), which he was equally ready to lend out for lectures and exhibitions (Harvey, 1995:260).

Taphouse was born in 1838. He left school at fourteen, and worked as a cabinet maker for four years. He and his father began trading in Oxford as music sellers and musical instrument dealers in 1857, and the music collection was started in the following year.

After learning the art of piano-tuning in London, Taphouse practised in and around Oxford for thirty years. He also took lessons on the piano and harmonium, and served as a church organist for seventeen years. He was awarded an honorary M.A. by Oxford University in 1904 ('*Dotted Crotchet*', 1904:629-6).

According to the account given by Ethel Kidson, it had been her idea to issue *Old English Country Dances* (1890), with an advertisement on the back for the projected *Traditional Tunes*. The former was published, at Kidson's own expense, in an edition of 80 copies. The bibliography attracted attention, and Taphouse wrote to Kidson 'saying he would be glad to show him sometime his own collection'. It was apparently as a result of this that 'uncle began to feel he was not alone in his taste for old tunes and music books'. Dr. Barrett also wrote to Kidson about the traditional air, to the effect that 'he also had collected some and he came to Leeds to see Uncle and they found they were both of the same mind, as to [the] worth of old melodies'.

Kidson went to see Taphouse at Oxford. As to *Traditional Tunes*, 'Mr. Taphouse had suggested the work should bear his imprint, and this was done' ([?]1926:65-72).

It appears however that Ethel's story of Taphouse contacting Kidson as a result of reading *Old English Country Dances*, although plausible, is less than accurate. The folder in Leeds Central Library which contains *A list of songs and music books ... belonging to Frank Kidson March 1886* also has a number of loose sheets detailing later acquisitions. Several of these refer to dealings with Taphouse, whilst one such is marked 'Books from Mr. Taphouse in exchange Oct. 1898'. So Kidson and Taphouse were in contact at least a year before *Old English Country Dances* was published.

We know, incidentally, that Kidson visited Taphouse in 1891, perhaps in connection with the publication of *Traditional Tunes*, for on this occasion he did a pencil sketch of Taphouse's premises (*Sketch Books*, vol. 2, 1890-91).

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The *Preface* to *British Music Publishers* also records Kidson's indebtedness to several other collectors, amongst whom was J.E. Matthew of Hampstead.

Kidson sent some proof pages to Matthew for perusal, and Matthew's letter of reply was most encouraging. He had been through his catalogue cards, he told Kidson, and made a list of all the works in his possession which were

printed in England before the beginning of the nineteenth century. Matthew enclosed this list, and had no objection to Kidson indicating his ownership. He added that

> It is always a pleasure to see any such enquirers as yourself, & I beg that you will not hesitate to make use of me in any way if you think I can be of assistance (20.03.1899).

This attitude is entirely consistent with the sentiments which Matthew later expressed at a meeting of the Royal Musical Association (21.04.1903). There are two ways of forming a library, he believed. In the first, the object of the owner is to get together as many scarce and valuable books as possible, 'their rarity and fine condition being their chief claim to notice'. This he called 'forming a museum and not a library'. The other way, which he had tried to follow, seemed to him to be

> much more worthy of the pursuit of the student and scholar: to form such a collection on the department of knowledge chosen, as may enable the owner and his friends to follow up any course of study which may arise (1903:151).

That the Musical Association lecture at which Matthew spoke was actually held in his own library gives some indication of his privileged personal circumstances (1903:139).

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Kidson's long-term associate Alfred Moffat seems to have spent a great deal of time in the British Museum Library acting on his friend's behalf. One such occasion was 12th. March 1904, when, having worked his way through Kidson's list of Gibbon's Fantasias and Madrigals, and sundry works by Locke, Purcell, Michael Earl, and Simpson,

Moffat fell foul of his friend's famously careless handwriting. He wrote back immediately:

> I am sorry I cannot read your last name. I have looked up *Grove* to try & strike him but without success. It might be almost anything but looks like MS. Wm.! You had better let me know again in good handwriting, and I'll find him out.

In the meantime, he was in a hurry to hear Ethel Barr in concert. Moffat hoped that Kidson found the rest of his information acceptable, but, if not, 'let me know and I'll come down here again'.

On another occasion, probably also in The British Museum Library, Moffat noticed an edition of *Six Duettos for Two Violins* by Antonio Kammel. 'The above just caught my eye & I do not find it in the Opus Magnus' [presumably *British Music Publishers*], he straightaway wrote to Kidson on a postcard (5.4.1913).

Of course the most successful of such relationships tend to be reciprocal. Moffat mentioned in a letter (19.04.1904) that he now had about 70 sets of Sonatas for violin or cello and bass, 'so you see my little collection is progressing'. He hoped however that Kidson would let him know if he came across any similar material, since he had found them 'so damnably difficult to lay hands on'.

Moffat's collection would eventually amount to over 700 items, many of very great scarcity, and mostly English, although some French pieces were included (Hyatt King, 1963:78).

A fragment of a letter in the Mitchell Library (26.10.1908) shows Moffat to have been writing a piece on

a 'Mr. Boyce' [presumably the composer Dr. William Boyce, 1710-1779], and he complains that 'It is difficult now to find out anything about so well known a man'. It is ironic that Moffat himself would in due course suffer the same fate of obscurity. Despite making extensive enquiries, I have been unable to locate any of Moffat's papers, and must now presume them to be lost.

Alfred Moffat was born in Edinburgh in 1866, and died in London in 1950. In common with many of his contemporaries Moffat studied composition in Germany, in his case for five years under Ludwig Bussler in Berlin. He remained in Germany for a further five years, returning to London in the late 1890s.

Moffat acted as general editor of both Schott's *Kammersonaten* series and Simrock's *Meisterschule der alten Zeit*. His preoccupation became the discovery and revival, through publication, of old and neglected compositions, particularly those of British violin composers of the eighteenth century and earlier. Such research was clearly complementary to Kidson's interests. For instance, Moffat's investigations into the Vincent family of composers enabled his friend to supplement his original half-column *Grove* entry on Thomas Vincent with a further two columns in the Appendix (1911:V:277,669). Moffat is thus credited with responsibility for bringing 'back to light' the English school of string sonata writers (including Boyce, Eccles, Arne, Vincent and others) which flourished in that period (Scholes, 1970:654,965). '[W]ith the object of making known

to the public a selection of the best of these compositions', Novellos were persuaded to publish his *Old English Violin Music* series (Moffat, 1906:Prefatory Note). Of the first six numbers, the *Musical Times* commented that

> Thanks are due to Mr. Moffat for rescuing these examples from the musty-dusty recesses of our museums and bringing them into the light of the present day. They can well stand its fullest glare! (1908:28).

As the word appears so frequently in discussions of Kidson and his associates, it comes as no surprise to discover in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* that 'his pioneering work in this field was of great importance' (1980:459: *Musical Times*, 01.07.1950:282).

Written in March 1894, the *Preface* includes the name of 'Mr. Frank Kidson, Leeds' amongst those to whom Moffat has 'applied for help' in compiling his *Minstrelsy of Scotland*. This is the earliest indication we have of their association. Ethel Kidson provides the following detail:

> Alfred Moffat corresponded with Uncle from Germany and at last came to see him at Leeds. It was rather funny that they had each formed a wrong conception of each others' appearance from their letters, Mr. Moffat imagined uncle ... a long tall man, and uncle had pictured Mr. Moffat much older than he turned out to be. They looked at each other and straight away there began a friendship that lasted until Uncle's death ... ([?]1926:84-5)

The work Kidson and Moffat undertook in collaboration, which centred upon the publication of old songs and dances from Kidson's collection, will receive more detailed consideration in ***Chapters 10*** and ***11***.

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The Glen collection was amassed by John Glen (1833-1904), a music publisher who made and dealt in bagpipes. He devoted his life to making this collection, and, like Kidson, issued his authoritative books on the basis of it.

Thomas Glen, John's father, had founded an instrument making business in 1825. When he retired in 1866, the business was continued by John and his brother Robert (1835-1911) as J. & R. Glen. The Glens became noted for their bagpipes, and by the turn of the century were recognised as the 'best makers' (*Grove*, 1910:II:179). In common with a number of other music collectors, the brothers also collected musical instruments, which were frequently lent to various exhibitions. Myers suggests that the instrument collection was mainly assembled by Robert, 'one of the pioneers in the study of the history of instruments' (1982:152).

John Glen's 'chief claim to fame' rests upon the 'splendid' work he did in investigating the sources of early Scottish music. This formed the core of his library, amassed over fifty years, and 'the study of these precious tomes was the delight of his leisure hours' (*The Musical Times*, 1905:27).

Like his friend Frank Kidson, Glen was extremely cautious of committing to paper any statement of fact or date of which he was not absolutely certain. Glen was

> most uncompromising with that class of writers who take things for granted, and who never dig down to the original source and put to the test the correctness of previous statements (1905:27).

Because of this concern for accuracy *The Glen Collection of Scottish Dance Music ...*, his first work, was not issued until 1891. *Early Scottish Melodies ...* (1900) has been claimed as his *magnum opus*. This quotation from Burns appeared on the title page:

> Facts are chiels that winna ding,
> And downa be disputed (1905:27).

Kidson's own preoccupation with facts runs as a continuous thread throughout this whole account. His *Grove* entry on John Glen notes that his friend's works were 'full of original research, and contain much biographical and historical matter which the student cannot afford to ignore' (1910:II:179).

It has already been mentioned that Kidson's assistance had been credited by Moffat in his *Minstrelsy of Scotland* (1894). So also was Glen's, and perhaps the three already knew each other at that time. Six years later, Kidson would himself credit Glen in *British Music Publishers*.

Loose sheets kept with *A list of songs and music books ... belonging to Frank Kidson March 1886* in Leeds Central Library tell us that Kidson undertook buying expeditions to Edinburgh in August 1890, July 1895, and August 1897. Very likely there were other occasions as well, for Ethel Kidson relates that 'Uncle and I often went to Edinburgh and had great delight there'. Presumably on account of the books which inevitably accompanied them on the return journey, she found it 'funny' that 'however light our luggage was ... it was always very heavy coming back' ([?]1926:86).

In Edinburgh Kidson and Ethel would visit John Glen's

flat, 'and when Uncle and he got together they would talk and compare notes for hours'. Ethel found this 'rather dull', but 'young Mr. Glen did his best to entertain me, and we sat on a balcony overlooking Edinburgh and talked'. Indeed Edinburgh was an 'enchanted city' to the Kidsons, where 'every step ... called forth from Uncle some scrap of History' ([?]1926:86-9).

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Ethel tells us that Kidson met Davidson Cook '[s]ome years before his death'. It was a 'delight' to him to find a friend 'who was interested in musical History and himself a collector, similar to his old friend Mr. Glen'. Kidson's pleasure in discovering a friend younger than himself, but with the same tastes, led him to 'fairly set his library and knowledge at Mr. Cook's disposal. He had a great admiration for Mr. Cook's thoroughness in all he did'. This admiration was mutual:

> Mr. Cook has told me how astonished he was by the extent of Uncle's knowledge of early Scottish music. As a Scotchman this was a delight to him, and he found when he first met uncle he thought he knew something of early Scotch music, but he left him feeling very ignorant, it was very pleasant to see these two together ([?]1926:126-9).

Davidson Cook was born in Baillieston, Lanarkshire, in 1874. His whole working life was spent with the Co-Operative Society, first in Scotland and then England. His transfer to the Barnsley British Co-Operative Society as Drapery Manager came in 1908. Here he became 'particularly well-known for his production of fashion parades', and remained in that same position until retirement in 1939.

More pertinent to the matter in hand however were his 'eminent literary associations'. *The Barnsley Chronicle* drew particular attention to the fact that he 'invariably aimed at meticulous accuracy' in his literary activities. He assisted in editing the twelve volume *Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 'regarded as one of the greatest literary achievements of the century', and was a 'well-known' contributor to *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Nineteenth Century*, and many Scottish periodicals. He was also a 'recognised authority' on Robert Burns (*The Barnsley Chronicle*, 13.12.1941; 20.12.1941).

A number of Cook's works are to be found in Barnsley Central Library. These range from his *Drapery and Boot Management; a textbook for manager and salesmen* (1925), through *Back Number: a fashion play in three acts* (1934), to his unpublished Burns 'tool'. This was a calendar of the most important years of Burns' life, specially compiled to check the dates attached by editors to the letters of Robert Burns.

In 1944 The National Library of Scotland bought Cook's copies of John Glen's *Early Scottish Melodies* (Edinburgh, 1900), and J.C. Dick's edition of *The Songs of Robert Burns* (London 1903). Both of these volumes bear extensive annotations, additions and corrections in the hand of both Kidson and Cook, suggesting that they worked on them together. Perhaps as a result of this collaboration, an article by Cook entitled *Annotations of Scottish Songs by Burns: an essential supplement to Cromek and Dick* appeared

in *The Annual Burns Chronicle* of 1922.

In February of that year, Kidson wrote to Davidson Cook about the latter's impending trip to Edinburgh. Armed with Kidson's supplementary notes and his permission to use them, Cook was to deliver a lecture on George Thomson. Kidson hoped that Cook would 'find some treasure in that city to bring home'. He continued in nostalgic vein: 'Ah me! thirty years ago the stuff I picked up then! & could have got more. Corri's *Collection* a penny a volume & plenty more which I could have had' (letters 25.2.1922, 26.2.1922).

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Certain other collectors with whom Kidson was later in contact are not mentioned in *British Music Publishers*. Perhaps their association only began as a result of their having read this work. One such was Dr. Arthur Henry Mann. Mann was organist and choirmaster of King's College, Cambridge, from the age of 26 to the day he died, 53 years later, in 1929. He was a composer, and ten of his tunes appeared in the *Wesleyan Tune-book* when he had still not reached twenty-five years of age (Moulton, 1917:123). In 1895 he edited *The Church of England Hymnal*. However most of his leisure time was devoted to the study of music and musical history, particularly in relation to East Anglia.

Mann appears to have possessed a similar temperament to Kidson, being described as '[a] man of simple tastes and unaffected enthusiasm' with a 'kindly and genial personality'. Like his friend, he was known for his

'painstaking industry and tireless enthusiasm in the cause of musical research ... not a stone was left unturned in the pursuit of accurate and detailed information'. Again like Kidson, much of this information was obtained by means of private correspondence. He seems to have felt the same affection for Norwich, the city of his birth, and East Anglia (Stephen, 1930:17-9) that Kidson did for Leeds and Yorkshire.

There are a number of letters from Mann kept with the various correction copies of *British Music Publishers*, from which it would be reasonable to surmise that Kidson must often also have written to him. Mann's correspondence is held in Norfolk Record Office, but Miss Jean Kennedy, the County Archivist, informs me that none from Kidson features in the collection (letter 6th. October 1995).

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Dr. Henry Watson is another of Kidson's associates not specifically mentioned in *British Music Publishers*. Kidson was particularly recognised for his skill in researching the history of any tune - thanks for his services in investigating the history of *Yankee Doodle* are recorded in an official report of the Library of Congress (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913:229) - and Ethel Kidson tells us that

> It was this quality of finding out things that made Dr. Henry Watson of Manchester christen him the musical Sherlock Holmes, and many of his letters to uncle begin 'My Dear Holmes'. So Dr. Watson and Sherlock met in real life ([?]1926:60-61).

John Graham also claimed to have first applied the title of the 'musical Sherlock Holmes' to Kidson (1927:48),

and it might well derive from the latter's friendship with Watson: in endorsing its accuracy, Lucy Broadwood simply ascribed its invention to 'an old friend' (01.01.1927:43). It was clearly a well-known designation in which Kidson took pride, perhaps even encouraging its use (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913).

Sherlock Holmes and Kidson would have been close contemporaries: clues contained in the stories suggest Holmes to have been the older by a year (Tracy, 1979:160), and their careers ran largely in parallel. Kidson's first articles on music - the series of *Notes on Old Tunes* - appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* from 1886 to 1887. At that year's end, *Beeton's Christmas Annual* featured *A Study in Scarlet*, the first Sherlock Holmes adventure (Hardwick, 1962:73). Kidson would have related strongly to Holmes' single-minded devotion to detail in solving a problem. Whether in musical history or murder, the principles governing detection were the same. Both the man and his fictional counterpart were convinced that unearthing the appropriate 'facts' would necessarily reveal the 'truth'.

Apart from antiquarian and research work connected with his 'remarkable' library, Watson was probably best known through his connection with numerous choral bodies in and around Manchester (*Musical Times*, 1911:101; Russell, 1987:212). The account of his early life - which includes working in a travelling panorama show as assistant to an American former slave - is fascinating, and it is regretted that no place can be found for it here.

Watson was born in Burnley in 1846, and, to cut a long story very short, flourished in the music retail business. He did not begin the systematic study of harmony and counterpoint until the age of thirty-two, apparently as a result of a chance meeting at Blackpool with a former fellow apprentice, and obtained his doctorate from Cambridge University nine years later. He subsequently became the first Dean of the Faculty of Music of Victoria University, Manchester, and one of the board of Professors at the Royal Manchester College of Music (*The Manchester Programme*, 17.5.1897; Sullivan, nd; Cumberland, 1911; *The Advertiser*, 6.1.1911).

Watson had scant sympathy with contemporary music, and indeed 'lived very largely in the past' (Cumberland, 1911:273). Perhaps in consequence, his compositions were held to lack originality.

In addition to this backward-looking orientation, a characteristic which invariably seems to have been ascribed to the musical antiquarians is that of generosity. Of Watson, Cumberland says

> I regret that in my own relations with him I received always and gave nothing. I asked for his time; he gave it ungrudgingly. I asked for his knowledge; it was mine for the asking. I asked for his advice; it was never withheld. And I am but one of hundreds, if, indeed, not of thousands (1911:277).

Even long after Watson's death John F. Russell, Librarian at the Henry Watson Music Library, was still in contact with Kidson. On 10th November 1920 he wrote to enquire the approximate value of A. Barber's *Psalme Tunes*

in four Parts ... The third edition, corrected and put into righte Time (York: 1698), as he had the opportunity of buying it for the Library. He thought also that Kidson would be pleased to learn of the existence of the third edition, since the one mentioned in *British Music Publishers* was the seventh.

We can only guess at the contents of Kidson's letter of reply, since the current Librarian, Mr. M. Thacker, informs me that they no longer hold any of Kidson's correspondence. However it must have been both speedy and encouraging, as Russell wrote again on 16th. November to thank Kidson for his letter, with its 'interesting information'. He enclosed transcripts of the title pages, presumably of Barber's book, and concluded the letter with 'Thanks for your kind offer of help. If you can be of any service I shall be pleased to take advantage'.

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Although many of Kidson's associates felt, like Watson, that they were 'Thine to command' (postcard 21.2.1906), one sometimes senses that perhaps they have been imposed on too much. Dr. James Culwick, organist and choirmaster of the Chapel Royal, Dublin (*The Musical Times*, 1909:449), had squeezed in some research on Carolan in The National Library for Kidson, between a holiday in Kerry and the beginning of a new teaching term. Culwick betrays an increasing reluctance to continue this work, especially when he writes that 'I suspected as it seemed to turn out that my former list was not of any great use to you. Any

such work done for another rarely touches his wants!' (letter 12.4.1899).

Yet such a rebuff serves to emphasise the extent to which these musical antiquarians had come to expect assistance from their fellows. Piecing together an accurate history of British music was a common enterprise with a common goal.

The Kidson Collection

> *... his very large collection of ancient music was an invaluable possession, which was freely placed at the service of all who were genuinely interested. Those who desired to consult his library must have been astonished to find it housed in a small and rather commonplace house in Leeds, and its owner a man of the simplest tastes ...* (*The Times*, 12.11.1926)[1].

Having begun with an account of the origins and growth of Kidson's music collection, this Chapter now concludes with a brief assessment of its composition in his maturity.

The 1910 edition of *Grove* (Appendix) stated that Kidson possessed a 'fairly large' library, formed to show the development of British vocal and dance music:

> Besides a mass of 17th- and 18th-century English publications, it is especially representative in Scottish, Welsh, and Irish early collections; also in country-dance books and ballad operas. There is also a considerable number of song-books (words only) and of 18th-century tune-books of sacred music (1910:V:651).

A glance at Kidson's bibliography would convince the reader of how firmly his authoritative writings were rooted in this library. The themes of his articles in publications such as the *Musical Times* and *Musical Antiquary* are echoed

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[1] A handwritten note for Ethel Kidson on the copy in Leeds Central Library informs her that the writer was J.A. Fuller Maitland.

here, as also are those contributions to *The Musical Quarterly* which Kidson regarded as the pinnacle of his achievement (letter n.d. [?Nov. 1926] from Ethel Kidson to Lucy Broadwood).

The collection also provided the basis for the semi-autobiographical *Collector* articles which Kidson wrote for *The Choir* in his later years, and references to its various facets may be found throughout the series. Taken together, they provide a window through which we can glimpse the Collection, and at least begin to appreciate its extent.

Although they are 'chiefly in dull brown and otherwise shabby bindings', his collection 'represents all types and periods of British music, besides including Irish and French'. Since his house 'had grown too small' for his 'rare' musical volumes, the Collector's library frequently resembled a 'pig-stye'. He was continually engaged in the 'futile attempt to reduce his volumes to order', but '[t]he fact was, he was being gradually conquered by them, and little by little he was getting engulfed' (1913:38:33; 1913:42:106; 1915:64:79).

There are tutors (1919:112:69-70), song books (1914:60:223-4), catches (1917:91:148-9), 'fifty or sixty' small oblong pocket manuscript books of fiddle tunes (1915:68:177; 1922:152:145), and numerous folios, including autographed copies of the works of Haydn (1915:64:79). The Collector might be resting in his armchair, 'hugging to himself half-a-dozen 'Playfords'' (1913:42:106), or perhaps could be encountered, as one visitor found, with literally

hundreds of old psalm and hymn tune books, 'of greater and lesser importance' laid 'in a heap' around him (1916:73:5).

The Collector confessed to having gathered together more copies of *The Beggar's Opera* (including first and second editions, and various folios) 'than any reasonable man should', besides the 'shoals' of ballad operas that succeeded it (1920:127:128-9). On another occasion he informed his dentist, himself a Scotsman, that he possessed 'one of the most complete collections of early Scottish music that has ever been got together' (1920:121:5).

From the reign of Charles the Second to that of Queen Victoria, 'the Collector could furnish you with every popular dance measure you desired'. A young lady with an interest in dance was referred to the Collector as one whose 'hoard' of old books on that subject

> from seventeenth century Playfords, down to the Victorian ballroom dances, was such as no public or private library could boast; save perhaps the British Museum, and he ran that close, she was informed (1922:152:145).

We learn also of the care that the Collector took over the preservation of his collection. He might be found mending the tears in an old folio of Vauxhall songs by pasting on that 'particular kind of transparent paper' from the lining of cigarette boxes, and then rubbing it over with fine sandpaper - a technique which had been one of his own 'discoveries'. As he confessed,

> ... I have to be my own book-binder; and in fact, I wouldn't trust any of my books into the hands of an ordinary book-binder, and the great ones - well, they are beyond my purse (1920:127:128).

On another occasion, whilst mounting an acquisition of

broadsides on thick paper, the Collector mused in more eloquent vein. He 'vowed' that

> ... no true collector of old music and such flimsy things could do without the paste pot, for what soulless bookbinder's hireling would take the loving care over torn leaves and decaying paper, with a view to neat restoration, other than one who loved the article he so carefully mended (1922:149:88).

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> *His work was of a type which, like virtue, was its own reward, for it was not likely to reap any great pecuniary return* ... (H.T., 12.11.1926).

From this survey a picture of Kidson emerges as a gifted amateur book collector and antiquarian. Although essentially working for his own interest, he was part of a developing network of like-minded people engaged in similar and related activities, discovering each other, sharing enthusiasm and information and co-operating in a collective endeavour to construct a history of national music. Such an endeavour was made all the more challenging by the difficulty and obscurity of the task.

But Kidson's interests were not to remain confined to the contents of his and his colleagues' libraries. Although never really forsaking his bookish obsessions, unlike most other bibliophiles he was to show an active and productive interest in the living oral tradition.

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Chapter 4: THE PIONEER FIELD COLLECTOR

> *He was a great authority on folk songs. His love for these quaint old airs had been lifelong and he was gathering them together and tracing their history as far as he could before the modern folk-song 'cult' came into existence* ('L.' [J.T. Lightwood], 1927:205:7).

Classification, according to Elsner and Cardinal (1994:1), invariably precedes collection. But this is only partially true. All classifications in the modern world are continually open to reclassification, thereby providing the momentum for the modern project.

The **legislator** is dependent on scholarly interest in the 'folk' and their culture to provide material which can be ordered and imbued with meanings, prior to its dissemination to the wider public (Raun and Plakans, 1990:133). Such 'scholars' had no notion of being the forerunners of any movement, and it is only in retrospect that they can be ordered into that category commonly referred to ([*see, for instance*] Harker, 1985:146) as 'the early English 'field-collectors''. Through chronicling particular events in his life, this chapter establishes Kidson's **pioneer** credentials in the collection of material from the oral tradition.

The importance of Kidson's long-forgotten early career as a landscape artist is highlighted as a means of establishing his presence amongst the rural 'folk'. Conversely, my research has revealed that what late twentieth century scholarship interpreted as evidence of Kidson's discovery of a flourishing urban singing tradition was nothing more than carefully disguised antiquarianism.

> *We wanted new songs and the obvious place for us to go was the Library. And daft as it seems they had the complete Kidson collection of books. And he was a Yorkshire collector - you know, we're Yorkshire people - and lo and behold we ended up with a virtual[ly] complete Yorkshire repertoire* (Mike Waterson [*TV interview*], 1982).

In any publication dealing with the history of the folk song movement in England ([*for instance*] Lloyd, 1967:5), the reader will invariably encounter a short section dealing with the 'pioneers'. Here, alongside the names of other pioneer collectors from the oral tradition such as Barrett, Baring Gould, and Broadwood, will appear that of Frank Kidson.

Although writing of events which had occurred over forty years previously, Ethel Kidson provides an explanation for her uncle's involvement in this field. Whilst Frank 'had been buying old Music and song books picking them up whenever he could', his recourse to the oral tradition was prompted by a growing appreciation that not all songs were accessible through print. He began noting down songs from his mother's singing which he 'felt sure' fell into this category, convinced that these 'very beautiful' airs possessed a 'certain quality' which made them 'different' from those available in printed form ([?]1926:58-9).

If we are to accept Ethel's account of Frank not beginning his own collecting until an awareness of absences in printed sources inspired this course of action, we must look to a commencement somewhere around the mid-1880s, or about Frank's thirtieth year. By this time both his library

and the knowledge he derived from it would have been strong enough to permit an appraisal of songs recovered from the oral tradition.

Kidson was less concerned with condition than comprehensiveness in his music library. He would transcribe tune books which he could not otherwise acquire, and restore or rebind those which entered his collection in poor condition. The material which they contained was the paramount consideration. This compulsion towards completeness must have been as strong in motivating him to collect from the oral tradition as Ethel's assertion that 'he noted them down from his own instinct to treasure all things of the past, rather unlike most young men' ([?]1926:59).

Whilst his father inspired his high regard for books in Frank, 'he liked to listen [to] his mother talking of old tunes'; and perhaps his broader musical interests derived more from her influence. Each week when he was a boy they 'eagerly waited' for the Bab ballads in *Fun* magazine, and 'Uncle said his mother would walk to meet him coming from school to tell him there was a Bab Ballad in *Fun* and they walked very fast home to read it together' ([?]1926:31-2;59-60). The profile of Kidson which appeared in *The Musical Herald* gives the impression that his mother was the first person from whom he could be said to have 'collected', albeit whilst still a child (01.08.1913:228).

Kidson was the ninth and last of his parents' children, by over five years. His father died in 1872, but

Frank remained with his mother at Burley Road until her death in 1890, whereupon Ethel went to live there with him. By this time he was thirty four years old.

Towards the end of her life, Mary Kidson had taken great interest in the impending publication of her son's *Traditional Tunes*. Ethel records that she had been 'very anxious' for it to be issued, as she recognised that her health was failing. Sadly 'she died before this could be accomplished' ([?]1926:68-9).

Kidson later told Lucy Broadwood that

> There are lots of little faults in my book but it was produced when I was pretty nearly heart broken. My mother & I had lived together & she had taken pleasure & interest in the tunes as I got them & was looking forward to the publication of her book, when she died (three years ago tomorrow) just before it was printed ([letter] 14.05.1893).

Traditional Tunes is the single work upon which Kidson's pioneer status in the field of folk song collecting principally rests. It was, as the full title indicates, *A Collection of Ballad Airs, Chiefly Obtained in Yorkshire and the South of Scotland*. Whilst Kidson undoubtedly was a proud Yorkshireman, narrowly partisan or parochial considerations were not the principal determinants of the geographical areas where his collecting was undertaken. Rather, it was the pragmatic one of where his artistic endeavours took him.

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Kidson's artistic career has tended to be overshadowed, in retrospect, by his subsequent one of writer. Palmer, for instance, mentions in passing that

Kidson had been 'an amateur painter' who went on 'sketching holidays' (1986[b]:150,156); perhaps influenced by Broadwood's assertion that 'for lack of technical training his work betrayed the amateur's hand' (1927:42). Yet a different interpretation is suggested by Kidson's own report that he had 'rather drifted into literature, after achieving some success as a landscape painter' (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913:228). Kidson certainly seems to have had some regard for his own work, examples of which 'he ventured to think good' (*The Artist*, 1883:183).

As we have already seen, Frank Kidson left the employ of his brother Joseph in order to earn his living as a landscape artist, an event which Ethel Kidson locates in 'the early seventies' ([?]1926:45). So from that time until he began writing articles for *The Artist*, the full decade which took him from late teens to late twenties, his sole occupation appears to have been that of landscape painter. Indeed, twenty years after leaving Joseph, he ascribed his tardiness in replying to a letter from Lucy Broadwood to being 'away from home sketching on the 'banks and braes of bonny Doon' in Ayrshire' (letter 14.07.1892).

Clearly the twin careers were pursued in parallel for a number of years, and it seems likely that the one of artist might well have been dominant through most of the 1880s. The *Directories* corroborate this contention: White's *Clothing District Directory* for 1881 lists Kidson as 'artist', an epithet which would appear consistently from that time until 1904. Upon moving to Hamilton Avenue in the

following year, he became simply 'Kidson, Frank'.

We are almost entirely dependent on Ethel Kidson for the provision of any detail concerning her uncle's artistic career. We learn that he had lessons from George Alexander, the Leeds watercolour artist, whose work, she believed, had never received 'the recognition it merited' ([?]1926:46).

Although Alexander worked mainly in the Leeds area, he also painted in North Wales, 'especially about 1878, which may be regarded as his best period' (Kaines Smith, 1926:84-5). Kidson's 1878 sketchbook features a number of watercolour sketches of the area around Bettws-y-coed painted between July and September of that year, and it is tempting to think that these might have been done in Alexander's company. Sadly, in the latter's case, '[t]he practice of his art never brought more than a bare competence, and he died in poverty' (Kaines Smith, 1926:85).

The catalogue of Leeds City Art Gallery shows that George Alexander's *Scottish Landscape* entered their collection as the gift of Frank Kidson. In 1926, six of Alexander's watercolours and three of his sketchbooks would be lent to the *Old Leeds Exhibition* by his former pupil (*Handbook of the Old Leeds Exhibition*, 1926:132).

Kidson subsequently got to know another Yorkshire artist named George Cammidge, who worked in oils. Together they went on painting expeditions with another artist named Holder. They were 'all very earnest workers and worshippers of Landseer', whose 'bohemian adventures were simple and

honest' (Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:47-9). In fine art, as in all things, Kidson's points of reference were located in the past.

Looking to the art history books, we find the partial and often misleading accounts that are commonly encountered in the case of the less well-known artist: for instance, Professor Child (1994) of the University of Leeds identifies Frank Kidson as the 'son of' his eldest brother Henry Edwin Kidson of Liverpool - presumably because Henry, a picture dealer and pawnbroker, had himself exhibited as a landscape painter (Walker Art Gallery, 1978). Nevertheless, a synthesis of the various biographies probably ensures reasonable accuracy in the accounts which follow.

Edward Henry Holder was born in Scarborough in 1847, and worked mainly in Yorkshire, despite moving in 1877 from Scarborough to Reigate, and subsequently London. He exhibited at Suffolk Street from 1866 to 1893, and the Royal Academy in both 1872 and 1873. From 1905 Holder may have been resident in South Africa, where he continued to paint. By 1920 he was back in London, where he died two years later (Child, 1994; Graves, 1906; Johnson & Greutzner, 1976; Turnbull, 1976; Waters, 1975; Wood, 1978).

Cammidge was too little known to feature in the older directories. He is however mentioned by Child (1994), from whose credited sources this account has been constructed. George Cammidge was born in 1846 at Withernsea, near Hull. Despite being the older man, he studied under Holder at

Scarborough. He later continued his studies 'abroad'. The son of a prosperous builder, and of independent means, he painted largely for pleasure. This is not to imply however that his work lacked merit. Despite being 'pressed' to do so, he apparently had no interest in exhibiting in London, but nevertheless took first prize at an exhibition in Paris. Cammidge also served as a member of the Withernsea lifeboat crew, where his precision of eye earned him the job of firing the rockets. He died in 1916 (Lang, 1974:54; *Yorkshire Life Illustrated*, 1954:33).

It is difficult at this distance in time to establish exactly where the search for a view to paint took Kidson. The Exhibition catalogues from Leeds City Art Gallery can give us a partial indication. Whilst such titles as *Ready for Leading* and *Windy* are less than illuminating, we also find *A Berkshire Cornfield, Cottages at Hinksley, Berks., Iffley-on-Thames, Near Whitby, Castle Craig (sic)*[1], *Knaresbro', On the South Coast, A Welsh Road, A Fen Country*, and even *A City Gate, Bruges* (*Illustrated Catalogue of the First Autumn Exhibition ...*, 1885; *Illustrated Catalogue of the Winter Exhibition of Paintings ...* 1886; *Catalogue of Exhibitions*, 1888-1897; *Leeds Art Gallery Catalogues* 1889-1893).

Further clues are to be found in Kidson's sketchbook for 1890-1, which locates him in such places as Abingdon, Sandford, Dorchester, Melrose, Goathland, Oxford, and Richmond (Yorkshire) during this period. In addition, Ethel

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[1] Surely '*Crag*' was intended.

Kidson cites Whitby, Goathland, and Lynwater in Devonshire as places visited by the 'bohemian' trio in those '[h]appy painting days which were always to uncle a dear memory' ([?]1926:49,51).

Although as a necessarily random sample this list need not be fully reflective of the places Kidson visited, it is intended to demonstrate that he must have spent a significant amount of time away from home on painting expeditions. If we consider the following extract from *Traditional Tunes*:

> The first version of 'The Banks of Sweet Dundee' is sung, to my own knowledge, as near note for note as possible in places so widely apart as the South of Scotland, and the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, and in Berkshire and Oxfordshire (1891:xv)

a distinct correlation between these places and those already mentioned is evident.

We can also appreciate that Kidson's work as an artist put him 'naturally' in touch with the oral tradition, thereby giving him some idea of and familiarity with it. Since the type of view he wished to find is more or less exclusive to rural areas - and unless he intended to capture scenes on photographs which he could later work from at home ([*see*] *The Artist*, 1883:183) - he would necessarily have stayed with country dwellers for extended periods whilst his paintings were executed. Indeed, his status must have been something akin to what would subsequently, in anthropological terms, be described as a 'participant observer'. This would have been the case whether he travelled alone or in company.

Ethel can invariably be depended on to conjure up an image and restore it to life:

> Cammidge was a bit of a dandy and always in love with some lady, he was the butt of a great deal of chaff from Holder and uncle. Holder played the guitar, and sang a little, [h]e was in great request at the farms where the 3 young artists stayed. One of his songs, By the Margin of fair [*illegible*] waters, with a yodel at the end, always went well ([?]1926:49-51).

However my contention remains that, initially at least, the search for songs must have been subsidiary or incidental to the search for a pictorial subject. Ethel Kidson surely achieved the appropriate balance of emphasis in writing that 'he became a landscape painter and on sketching tours he collected his songs' (1948:128).

Traditional Tunes

Regrettably, the manuscript material which formed the basis of *Traditional Tunes* is no longer available to us. It is however possible to categorise the items which make up the collection in terms of their provenance. Loosely, this could be done by differentiating those which Kidson collected in the field himself from others passed on by friends, correspondents and relatives.

The volume comprises 83 titles, but variants and different tunes bring the total number of acknowledgements of derivation to 107. Often these are clear enough. For instance, Kidson states specifically that he noted down *An Auld Man He Courted Me* 'from the singing of Mr. A. Wardill, of Goathland, in North Yorkshire' (1891:92). At other times they reflect an astonishing degree of vagueness, as when Kidson records that he got a version of *The Indian Lass*

'from a person's singing in North Yorkshire' (1891:110). Again, to whom can we ascribe the collection of *As We Were A-Sailing* ('This fragment was obtained on the Yorkshire coast'), *Johnny Todd* ('some blanks caused by the reciter's memory have had to be filled up'), and *Brocklesby Fair* ('The air was noted down at Howden')? (1891:99,103,150). I have put these examples down to Kidson himself, one of his Liverpool relatives, and Charles Lolley respectively, but there is always the possibility that I am wrong.

By my calculations Kidson can be credited with collecting 32 tunes. Seven of these he got in Dumfriesshire. Only Mrs. Calvert of Gilnockie, who supplied two of them, has been named, but one other tune was 'heard sung at' Gilnockie as well. North Yorkshire - at that time, of course, differently constituted to now - provided seven from Mr. A. Wardill, and one from Neswell Pennock, both of Goathland; two from Mr. Halliday of Newtondale; one 'from the Northallerton district;' one heard in the 'little public houses' at Fylingdales; and three others located simply in that Riding. Two were collected at Flamborough, and a 'fragment' on 'the Yorkshire coast'. 'Several' copies of the air and words to *The Holbeck Moor Cock-Fight* were discovered in Leeds, and 'the same tune' as one of the *Barbara Allen* variants was got at Bradford. This leaves six which cannot be tied to a specific place, although one of them was 'from the singing of a Scotch girl' (1891:152).

I believe that Kidson's relatives in Whitby were responsible for passing on two, whilst those in Liverpool

probably contributed one. *The Spinning Wheel* had been handed down from one of Kidson's grandfathers, and a further three came from the singing of his mother.

Of the rest by far the greatest number, which I would put at thirty one, came from Charles Lolley, of Leeds. After this came Benjamin Holgate, of Headingley, with twelve. Other contributors both from the immediate area and further afield were John Holmes of Roundhay (1); William Cheetham of Horsforth (2); Mrs. Holt of Alderhill, Meanwood (6); Washington Teasdale of Leeds (3); Thomas Hewson of Roundhay (1); John Briggs of Leeds (1); 'a Horbury correspondent' (1); 'an anonymous contributor from Calverley, near Leeds' (1); 'a lady' (2); Mr. C. Butteriss (1); and James B. Shaw of Cornbrook, Manchester (2). One Leeds contribution - *Through the Grove* - appears to be unattributable. Finally, four airs were provided from manuscript collections in Kidson's possession.

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> *We ought to shake off as much as possible of our conventional civilisation which frightens uneducated peasants, and makes them think, at best, that we wish to turn them into ridicule ... we can aim at inspiring such a measure of confidence as will persuade the natural man to ... lend us the key to his general treasure-box before all that is inside be reduced to dust* (Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco, 1886:xi-xii).

At the first meeting of the Folk Song Society, almost a decade later, Kate Lee would give a frank but amusing paper on the difficulties which the putative collector encountered in first locating singers, and then extracting from them what was considered to be the 'right type' of

song (1899:7-13). Kidson was perhaps unique amongst the early collectors in that his Yorkshire speech helped to overcome the socio-cultural barrier with which all those engaged in such work had to contend.

He outlined his approach in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (29.9.1906). Having identified a potential informant, Kidson suggested that the collector should 'stand him a pint or two', and then try to 'listen respectfully' whilst the singer exhausts his repertoire of 'classics of the mid-Victorian era of song'. At this point, the collector should 'skilfully turn him aside into the old Sheffield songs his father used to sing':

> A remark to the effect that after all 'there's now't like t'owd songs' [*my emphasis*] will certainly produce an affirmative, and if the hearer has time and inclination to listen, a crop of interesting bygone ditties formerly current in the district.

Even if it was not his accustomed manner of speech - and there is no reason to believe this to be the case - Kidson's ability to at least use the vernacular must have gone some way to reducing the discomfort which informants often suffered.

We can, for instance, contrast the experience of Kidson's Sheffield singer with that endured by 'Tom C----', of Wells in Norfolk.

After a great deal of enquiry in the district, Kate Lee had finally been told of Tom, who was thought to know old songs. He was 'sent for', and told to call on Mrs. Lee in the evening. When he arrived, he was 'dressed up in his best, and shaking with fright':

> He said he thought he could sing, but when he began he was so frightfully nervous that not a note could he utter, and he gave way to groans, interspersed with whistling when he got anywhere near the air, and I almost gave up the idea as hopeless after hearing him... (1899:9).

Yet the resourceful Mrs. Lee was not to be daunted by such setbacks. If the story A.P. Graves recounted to the Welsh Folk-Song Society is to be believed,

> To get hold of some folk-songs which she knew were reserved for the ears of the frequenters of a country inn in the Broads, she obtained admittance as a waitress at the ordinary table, and when the diners had settled down to beer, tobacco and song, she got these precious folk-songs into her head, and kept them there for the benefit of the Society (1906:8).

It seems certain that a close relationship existed between Kidson and some of those from whom he collected, as might be expected when he stayed with them on protracted artistic expeditions. One such was 'a woman' in whose 'little thatched cottage' on the Scottish borders he lodged 'for some time'. One day Kidson heard her 'crooning to her child what turned out to be a hitherto uncollected version of *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow*, and that to a beautiful and early tune' (*Yorkshire Folk Song* [lecture, 15.09.1906])]. Kidson had provided further detail in *Traditional Tunes*, where his notes reveal that

> I obtained this traditional version of the ballad, as well as the fine old tune, from Mrs. Calvert, of Gilnockie, in Eskdale ... Mrs. Calvert originally obtained it on the braes of Yarrow from her grandmother, who was the celebrated Tibbie Shiel, the humble friend of Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg (1891:21).

Kidson would again refer to Mrs. Calvert in a letter to Lucy Broadwood of 24th. September 1907:

> You of course know my copy of Dowie Dens of Yarrow which I took down from a granddaughter of Tibbie Shiel who lived at St. Mary's Lock & had been servant with James Hogg's father. The words were much like a MS copy which were found in Scott's papers ...

However it is left to Ethel Kidson to relate that in returning from a trip to Eskdale in Scotland, where he 'collected many folk songs from the village people', her uncle brought with him Mrs. Calvert's daughter Maggie as servant for his mother. Indeed, 'Grandmother became very fond of Maggie and she lived with them some years' ([?]1926:61-2).

Towards the end of her life Ethel provided a reminiscence of one of Kidson's collecting expeditions. She was well placed to do this, since she 'shared in his pursuits, and loved folk songs and was with him often when he collected' (1948:129). Kidson's 'simple' tastes and artist's income determined that they should stay in cottage lodgings. On the occasion which she recalls, they stayed at Goathland with Allan Wardell - the same person as Frank's 'Wardill' - who was a pointsman on the railway. Wardell had arranged for 'Old Jack', a fiddler, to visit in the evening:

> Jack and Uncle soon made friends; Allan would recall an old song, Jack would catch up the tune on the fiddle and soon we would all be singing it together ... In this way he got many songs, for people in the village heard of him and would stop and say 'Mr. Kidson do you know an old song that goes like this?' Uncle felt they were giving him of their best and he took delight in their gifts (1948:129).

It seems unlikely that Ethel would have undertaken this trip with Frank before 1890, as she was still then

resident in Liverpool. So it is in keeping with the nature of small places that Kidson, as a previous visitor, would probably already be well known in Goathland at the time Ethel describes. He had been there with Cammidge and Holder, and may well have stayed with Wardell before on his painting expeditions. After all, Wardell had been the source of several of the *Traditional Tunes* collection, and understood Kidson's requirements well enough to comment that Old Jack 'knows lots of old tunes he'll just suit you' (1948:129).

Although Harker - for his own reasons - does his best to present the situation simply as one of class-based cultural appropriation (1985:163), that Wardell was held in some regard by the Kidsons is demonstrated by the fact that variants of his name appear in both of Ethel's published works. *Herringfleet* (1912) features a coastguard by the name of 'Mr. Wardill', whilst one of only three characters in her play *A Matter of Conscience* (1930) is called 'Allan Wardle'.

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> *... folk music represents the culture of the countryside and art music the culture of the city* ... (Scholes, 1980:368).

Through judicious omission, Kidson seems to have accentuated the pastoral credentials of his collection. We find, for instance, references to 'sporting farmers', 'a ploughman', and the like, as well as their coastal counterparts, the 'fisher folk'. Mrs. Calvert's lineage, as we have seen, is also highlighted. But mention of Wardill's

work on the railway - which symbolised the intrusion of the modern age into the perceived rural idyll - seems to have been deemed inappropriate.

It is interesting to subject the material which Kidson obtained in the town to similar consideration. In his *Foreword* to the 1970 edition of *Traditional Tunes* - the first to be published in England since Kidson's original subscription edition of 200 copies - Green suggested that Kidson's annotations 'throw some light on the existence of the folk song tradition in industrial and semi-industrial communities', since

> close study of his notes demonstrates ... a significant amount which has its provenance in the industrial West Riding, either in the towns (specifically Leeds and Bradford) or in communities such as Headingley and Meanwood - now suburbs of Leeds, but in 1891 villages on the fringe of and highly tributary to the great industrial and commercial centre of the Riding (1970:xv).

This leads Green to lament that Kidson 'never drew the obvious conclusion' from the 'fact' that a great deal of his material had 'its immediate provenance in or near the industrial area'. In consequence, he failed to undertake the 'systematic investigation of that area' which *Traditional Tunes* had indicated to be a suitable environment for 'a flourishing song-tradition' (1970:xvi).

Influenced, I suspect, by Green, Sykes (1993:451-2) follows a similar line of argument. He suggests that, as a work published early in the revival, *Traditional Tunes* should have demonstrated to other collectors that industrial areas would prove fruitful grounds for the

discovery of traditional song cultures. Through their exclusive concentration on rural areas, the succeeding wave were accordingly deemed to be remiss in not following Kidson's pioneering footsteps into the urban streets.

These writers evidently accept the possibility that Kidson had tapped into some potentially vibrant tradition. Indeed, taking the notes which Kidson provided to accompany his songs in *Traditional Tunes* at face value, it reflects an impression which he seems to have done little to discourage his readers from fostering. In the absence of any information to the contrary, we assume his Leeds informants to be what might be termed 'ordinary' people.

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> *Fortunately Frank Kidson had a number of good friends who knew many old songs ...* (*Yorkshire Evening News*, 20.04.1933).

> *In the case of Sharp, the Hammonds and Vaughan Williams, for example, we tend to know not only a selection of the songs they collected but also the names of their main informants and their localities. **Who knows of Kidson's Kate Thompson or Benjamin Holgate or Charles Lolley?*** (Palmer, 1971:157) [*my emphasis*].

In view of the fact that one third of the texts and tunes in *Traditional Tunes* 'came from three people about whom Kidson tells us almost nothing - Mrs. Holt, Benjamin Holgate and Charles Lolley' (Harker, 1985:163), let us turn to an examination of what Kidson does, and - perhaps more importantly - does not, tell us of his identifiable Leeds contributors. Besides Holt, Holgate and Lolley, these are John Briggs, William Cheetham, Thomas Hewson, John Holmes, and Washington Teasdale.

Although he is credited with twelve contributions, all we learn from Kidson about Mr. Benjamin Holgate of Leeds is that he has been connected with that city for some time, he was Kidson's 'friend', and that he had heard an English girl sing *Barbara Allen* in Ghent some forty years previously (1891:vi,19,37,72).

Benjamin Holgate ([?]1838-1915), Fellow of the Geological Society, was 'well known' in local engineering and scientific circles.

He was born in Holbeck, Leeds, the son of an engineer. He served apprenticeships with two Leeds engineering companies before going to Lawrence's School at East Keswick. Here he studied mathematics, whilst teaching technical drawing and French.

In 1890, when *Traditional Tunes* was in an advanced state of preparation, Benjamin Holgate was resident at *Regent House*, 4, Grosvenor Road, Headingley. He had by then worked for an engineering company in Hunslet for some thirty years, first as a draughtsman and subsequently in the counting-house. He would be appointed Company Secretary in 1897, and a Director seven years later.

Holgate had lived for three years in Belgium and France as a child, which explains both his ability to teach French, and Kidson's allusion to Ghent. He was a member of the Yorkshire Geological Association, for a long period President of the Leeds Geological Society and the Leeds Naturalists' Club, and, from its formation, President of the Leeds Co-Operative Naturalist's Club. He read many

papers before these and other societies, including the Engineering Society, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Leeds Association of Engineers (*Yorkshire Geological Society Proceedings*, vol. VI, 1876; vol. XII, 1891; *Slater's Directory*, 1890; *Yorkshire Post*, 11.03.1915, 15.03.1915).

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William Cheetham provided Kidson with the published version of *Chevy Chace*. He also sent Kidson a 'fragment' of *Henry Martin*. In his accompanying letter, he wrote that

> It was sung by a *very* old woman - a bobbin winder - in my mother's youth, about ninety years ago, and my recollection of the air is from hearing it sixty years ago. I only wish we had the words as accurate as the air (1891:18,29-30).

William Cheetham was a successful businessman who manufactured cloth at Woodbottom Mills, Horsforth, for more than 40 years. In addition he promoted and managed the Calverley and Horsforth District Gas Company.

He was one of the founders of both the Calverley Mechanics' Institute and Leeds Geological Association, acting as President of the latter during the years 1882-4. He was also an active member of the Council of the Yorkshire Geological and Polytechnic Society. For a time he filled the position of chairman of the Exchange Club, a 'social institution' at Leeds.

Cheetham was a Fellow of the Geological Society, and in 1887 sat on the Yorkshire Boulder Committee - alongside Benjamin Holgate (Tomlin, *Notebook* 33:1-3).

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Of his 'friend' Washington Teasdale, the only information Kidson provides us with is that he had heard one song 'something like forty years ago' at a harvest-home supper at Brough, Westmorland [which, incidentally, led Palmer (1986[a]:26) to describe him as a 'native' of that place]; he had 'an early remembrance' of another; and the third he learnt 'some twenty-five or thirty years ago in India' (1891:86,158,159).

Washington Teasdale, a native of Leeds, was a Fellow of both the Royal Astronomical and the Royal Microscopical Societies, one of the founders of the Thoresby Society, and a proprietary member of the Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society. He was an honorary member of the Leeds Naturalists' Club, and both founder and past President of Leeds Astronomical Society. Teasdale was one of the 'leading personalities' who took part in both the founding of Leeds Photographic Society in 1852, and its reorganisation thirty years later. He was also a member of the Camera Club of London. Indeed, in photography 'he was among the pioneers'.

Teasdale was the subject of the first flashlight portrait ever to be taken in Leeds. It is also likely that he was the first person in the world to adopt the practice of illustrating lectures by means of lantern slides, as he would do on 'hundreds' of occasions in connection with various scientific and literary societies. His collection of slides eventually numbered 'upwards of 10,000'.

Teasdale had been brought up by his grandfather, and

was a civil engineer by profession. Much of his early life was spent as a Civil Servant in India, where he was involved in the development of the railways. His home at 255 Hyde Park Road was described as 'a veritable treasure-house of scientific apparatus, works of art, interesting curios, and other objects that denoted the wide range of his studies and sympathies'. The more unusual of his hobbies included the creation of 'grotesque figures and designs' out of the fingerprints of eminent men. He also devoted a considerable amount of time to studying the monoliths at Stonehenge, as evidenced by his book *The Age and Origin of Stonehenge: astronomical theories* (Leeds, 1899). The *Leeds Mercury* commented that 'few men of the present generation have enjoyed anything like his experience and intimacy with distinguished scientific men'.

Teasdale died whilst attending a meeting of the British Association at Southport. Included in 'the small company' which gathered at his 'quiet and unostentatious' funeral was Mr. F. Kitson (*sic*) (*Leeds Mercury*, 21.09.1903 and 25.09.1903; *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 21.09.1903; *Yorkshire Post*, 21.09.1903, 25.09.1903 and 20.10.1903; Leeds Photographic Society, 1952; Leeds City Art Galleries, 1981).

In Slater's 1890 Leeds Directory, produced the year before *Traditional Tunes* was published, we find Washington Teasdale then resident at *Rosehurst*, Grosvenor Road, Headingley - three doors away from Benjamin Holgate.

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In his notes to *The Three Ravens*, Kidson writes:

> I am favoured with the copy here presented by Mr. John Holmes, of Roundhay, who first heard it in about 1825 from his mother's singing. This was in a remote village among the Derbyshire hills, most aptly named Stoney Middleton.

Holmes also understood the tune to be 'current among the people in Denmark' (1891:17).

John Holmes, 'whose name and fame as an antiquary are well known beyond the borders of his native county', was born in Sheffield in 1815. Ten years later the family moved to Leeds.

In 1838 Holmes succeeded to his father's business. He began to collect books, pictures, ancient carvings and pre-historic antiquities, and in 1850 built a special room in his new house to accommodate these treasures. In 1873 he undertook a tour of the whole Mediterranean area, adding to his already valuable collection, and 'his home became the resort of many visitors in search of information on art and antiquarian topics' (Smith, 1882:58).

Holmes was a student of his own locality as well as further afield. He prepared *A Sketch of the History of Leeds, from pre-historic times to 1872 A.D.*, and lectured widely on such subjects as art, antiquities, poetry, and general literature. He also spoke before the Yorkshire Geological Society (*Proceedings*, vol. 9, 1886).

This was only one side of Holmes, however. He also devoted 'much time and labour' to the development of various social, political, and intellectual institutions in the neighbourhood of Leeds. He was involved in both

Building and Co-Operative societies, and 'spared neither pocket, voice, nor pen' on behalf of the Yorkshire and Derbyshire miners.

Holmes became Treasurer of the Miners' National Conference in 1864, and frequently spoke at co-operative congresses and miners' demonstrations. He also contributed papers on co-operation, trade strikes, building societies, and political economy to meetings of such bodies as the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and the Social Science Association (*Transactions*, 1859:640-654;1864:583-4).

In 1865 Holmes had assisted in a scheme for the building of model cottages in Leeds, which ended in financial loss for the promoters. In 1874 he retired from business, and suffered further pecuniary losses in 1881. He resolved to leave England, offering his unique archaeological and ethnological collections to the Corporation of Leeds at half the value placed on them by an expert, conditional on the collection being made the nucleus of a public museum. This offer was accepted by the Corporation (Smith, 1882:57-9).

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In the notes to the 'very musical' *Young Bucks a-Hunting Go*, Kidson acknowledges that he is 'indebted' to Mr. Thomas Hewson, of Roundhay:

> It was, he informs me, commonly sung on the borders of Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire, between 1820 and 1840. The version of the song and air is here given as it was sung by

a follower of the Cheshire hounds during that period (1891:143).

Thomas Hewson, Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, lived at The Hollies, Park Road, Roundhay. He was employed as Surveyor and Engineer (1882), Engineer of the Borough Waterworks (1890), and City Engineer (1894), eventually resigning the position of Deputy City Engineer to the Leeds Corporation in March 1906, after twenty two years service. Thereafter he went into private practice (Directories; *Yorkshire Evening News*, 03.03.1906).

His publications include *A Report on Leeds Intercepting Sewers and the Disposal of Rainfall* (Leeds, 1883), and *Descriptions of the Leeds Sewage Works, and of the Various Processes which have been tried for the Purification of the Sewage* (Leeds, 1884).

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Mrs. Holt, of Alderhill, Meanwood, remembered *Green Bushes* being sung in Stockport about 1838; she learnt *The Farmer's Boy* 'many years ago' on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire; 'Mrs. Holt remembers [*Colin and Phoebe*] being sung in Stockport, about fifty years ago' (1891:32,47,63,73).

The only person I have been able to find in the directories who might be Kidson's **Mrs. Holt** is Martha Hannah Holt, certificated schoolmistress, of Bentley Hill, Meanwood (Post Office, 1882-3). This identification might well be incorrect.

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Mr. John Briggs, of Leeds provided Kidson with a copy

of the tune for *When Adam Was First Created*, together with a fragment of the words (1891:153).

I am unable to find any further information on John Briggs.

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Considering the number of times Lolley's name appears in *Traditional Tunes*, we are told very little about him. We know that he is 'Mr. Charles Lolley, of Leeds'; also, by implication, that he spent at least part of his youth 'in the district of Howden, in the East Riding of Yorkshire' (1891:vi,24).

Lolley has 'given' (1891:70), 'communicated' (1891:172), 'sent' (1891:61,78,167) and 'favoured' (1891:65,69) Kidson with many tunes. His 'remembrances' are from the Howden area, but he has 'obtained' or 'noted down' material specifically on Kidson's behalf in the East Riding 'while this work has been in progress'. So we find, for instance:

> The second setting was noted down for me by Mr. Lolley from East Riding singers;
> ... it has been noted down for me by Mr. Lolley, at Goole;
> A tune obtained for me by Mr. Lolley ... Musicians will, I think, congratulate Mr. Lolley upon obtaining such a fine and sterling old air (1891:vi-vii,24,46,75,78,108,131,139,170).

Charles Lolley was born in 1856, and began life as a bricklayer. Around 1880 he entered the employment of William Nicholson and Son Ltd., a well-known Leeds firm of contractors. After first being made up to foreman, Lolley was appointed manager in 1891. He stayed with this company until his retirement, whereupon the *Leeds Mercury*

(14.05.1928) printed the short occupational history from which this account is taken.

Lolley's employer specialised in the building of banks. So whilst painting expeditions took Kidson to different areas, Lolley built 'many banks in various parts of the country, in places as far removed as Devonshire and Scotland'. He specifically mentions putting in 'a couple of reinforced floors' at Beckett's Bank in Goole in the late 1880s, and it may be that he did some collecting for Kidson at that time (1891:131,173).

Lolley was said to have had two main hobbies: reading, and 'the rather curious one of copying out tunes for the violin'. Whenever he came across any music, 'especially of songs or hymns, he copied out the air in manuscript form'. He had copied 20,000 tunes, 'all bound in neat volumes'. I have seen one of them in the Kidson Collection at the Mitchell Library, where it is catalogued as Lolley's *Miscellaneous Collection of Airs, Songs, etc.*.

Lolley outlived Kidson, and attended his funeral (*Yorkshire Post*, 11.11.1926).

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It is interesting to speculate how Frank Kidson came to know these other contributors to *Traditional Tunes*. We learn from Ethel Kidson that a number of people wrote to him as a result of reading what she refers to as his 'very interesting series of Articles in the Leeds Mercury called New Lights on old Tunes' ([?]1926:62-3) [This was in fact *Notes on Old Tunes*, which ran from 1886 to 1887].

One such was Mr. W.W. Parkin, of Eastbourne, Darlington, whose contribution of *A North Riding Hiring Song* - perhaps better known as *Seventeen Come Sunday* - was published after the series had concluded. Another was Mr. Charles Lolley, 'who gave him many Traditional airs and became his firm and trusted friend'([?]1926:63). Because Lolley approached Kidson simply as an interested individual, he must receive separate consideration from the other contributors.

Perhaps these other associates also corresponded as a result of reading the *Leeds Mercury Supplement* series. But there are several other potential, and probably more likely, explanations. For instance, Teasdale held a 'leading' position in Leeds Photographic Society (Leeds Photographic Society, 1952:8,12) to whom Kidson read papers on composition in landscape photography in both April 1883 and July 1886 (*The Artist*, 1883:182; 1886:265). Teasdale would have known Holgate as a near neighbour and fellow member of Leeds Naturalists' Club. Holgate sat on the Yorkshire Boulder Committee with Cheetham, and could have known Holmes through the British Association. A common interest in engineering linked Teasdale, Holgate and Hewson.

It was fashionable for middle class men of the time to indulge in learned pursuits such as Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, and Geology. Photography, then characterised by its 'restless, excited, pioneering creativity' (Roberts, 27.10.1996), also had its place in this group.

Paul Goodman, Registrar at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television has informed me (letter, 04.03.1996) that since photography provided a common link with many other pursuits, particularly those of a scientific nature such as botany and astronomy, many photographic societies contained members who were both scientists and photographers. I have been in contact with Mr. Bigney, archivist of Leeds Photographic Society, in an unsuccessful attempt to explore this connection further. There are nevertheless a number of permutations which could be constructed to suggest that these men were at least known to each other, often resting on their seemingly common interest in the sometimes distant past.

Perhaps Kidson was already acquainted with all of them; or perhaps there was a general awareness of his search for old songs in Leeds antiquarian circles. Indeed, in the light of Marshall's (1995) analysis, these contributors appear to have been quintessential antiquarians: and, as such, were far removed from that 'flourishing song-tradition' which Kidson, in Green's evaluation, had failed to fully exploit (1970:xvi).

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Frank Kidson, according to Lucy Broadwood, had 'certainly' been the first to put his knowledge at the disposal of those other early collectors of whom she was herself one (01.01.1927:43). By his own account, correspondence 'over mutual 'finds'' with both Barrett and Baring Gould - who would, incidentally, become perhaps the

leading authority on Sherlock Holmes - had begun before 1890 (Kidson, 21.02.1907).

When Broadwood paid a 'flying visit' to Kidson at Burley Road in 1892, they seem to have begun a conversation about Baring Gould which was curtailed by lack of time. Kidson was anxious to continue it, and used his letter of 14th. May 1893 as an opportunity to do so. He seems to have been particularly stung by assertions, emanating from Baring Gould, that *Traditional Tunes* might have been less than his own work. I believe an extended quotation from the letter to be justified:

> From what you hinted he does not think much of my book because he has an impression that I have not gone among <u>the people</u> to collect my tunes. He is in this mistaken. I have not sat at home & received tunes ready noted down by post. People to whose names I prefix the title 'Mr.' he would have spoken of as:- '<u>Old John So & So very illiterate</u>'. Mr. Lolley is a bricklayer whose father kept a country inn in the East Riding & Lolley being a good fiddler can play the tunes which he remembers hearing sung when he was a lad at the old country inn.
>
> He and I have noted his tunes down together & with this exception all the rest I have myself noted down from the several singers & as I have been <u>very</u> careful I believe I have got them fairly right as far as musical notes will give the air as sung.

This is, at any rate, how Kidson wanted to present the matter. However it seems difficult to reconcile with his stated wish in the *Preface* of *Traditional Tunes*, for 'any person who is possessed of, or who can obtain, traditional melodies, to transmit copies to him' for inclusion in the projected second series. At the end of the book, he again 'makes the request that such persons who are possessed of any of these fugitive melodies, and who are willing to

impart them, would contribute to the intended volume' (1891:vii,176).

Indeed, these were only echoes of previous requests made in *Old English Country Dances*; a volume 'expected to hold particular appeal for 'antiquaries' with particular interests in both music and Yorkshire' (1890:iii).

It is important to appreciate however that Kidson was doing no more than following current practice in seeking contributors. We might for instance consider a letter written to Lucy Broadwood on 14th. March 1893 by Edward Joseph Thomas, an undergardener, then of Dewsbury in the West Riding of Yorkshire:

> In the Selbourne Society's magazine for March 1893 I noticed a request for old songs and tunes, so I am sending three tunes which may or may not be old ones. I have often thought it would be a pity for them to perish if they are really old ... I humbly apologise if I have sent what you may consider are 'trashy modern' songs, for no one detests the bogie-man kind of song more than I do.

Thomas' letter demonstrates the degree to which the concept or convention of what both constitutes and characterises 'folk-song' had already been established in popular currency:

Authenticity is derived through rural association:

Thomas learnt his three songs 'some years ago' from another undergardener, who had in turn learnt them from the labourers on a farm where he had once worked.

A song has a true or correct version:

He has compared his own version of *Barbara Allen* with that contained in a collection of Scotch songs published by

Boosey, and concludes that his own is 'most likely corrupt'.

The melody of a folk-song is inviolable:

He has added accompaniment to his *Barbara Allen* tune, but 'only as an experiment'.

Authoritative persons are able to evaluate material:

Thomas is 'doubtful' about his third song, but, as he has little knowledge of old English songs, he has sent it to Broadwood 'to be sifted'.

We might note, incidentally, that in the 1950s Ewan MacColl would persuade his BBC producer to put advertisements in the railwaymen's journals, and even write direct to loco sheds, in order to elicit contributions. A.L. Lloyd's collection of songs published as *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (1952) was similarly compiled mainly by post (Woods, 1979:20).

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It is worth reminding the reader at this point that just as 'the folk' are defined by exclusion, so different categories of music, their respective characteristics and the delineations between them, are always determined, or legislated, from above. The fluid boundary between 'pastoral' or 'folk' on one hand, and 'art' on the other, is similarly set from above, and is a reflection of what 'art' decides it is not.

In Bennett's terms, a 'folk tradition' is less an inheritance of 'similarly placed' material than an active construction, 'a particular form of the cultural

appropriation of representations handed down from the past' (1979:68).

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Subsequent assessment of the work of pioneers is invariably accompanied by the application of criteria which had not been established, or fixed, at the time the pioneers were active. Sometimes posterity will vindicate the pioneer's actions. Kidson's *Traditional Tunes* and Bruce and Stokoe's *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (1882) were, for instance, the only texts to be presented

> in the manner now commonly accepted in Europe and America for the publication of folk-song for the use of the student - *i.e.* melody and text, without pianoforte or other accompaniment, supported by notes concerning provenance and matters of comparative and musical interest (Dean-Smith, 1954:28-9).

Kidson specifically deals with this question in his *Preface* to *Traditional Tunes*. In order not to detract from the 'antiquarian value of the whole', and despite the 'fact' that 'very great difficulty attends the notation of irregular old melodies from untutored singers', he has 'endeavoured to set down the airs as far as musical notes will permit with the utmost fidelity, scrupulously avoiding any attempt at arrangement or emendation'. All 'tampering' with the airs to correct 'corruptions which have crept in' has been resisted. Since the airs in *Traditional Tunes* 'have perhaps *never* been harmonised', he asks, 'Is it then desirable to put such old wine into new bottles?' (1891:v,vi).

But when it comes to the collection of songs, Kidson

appears to be remiss. Despite his protestations, a large proportion of this collection could not conceivably now be ascribed to Kidson himself. Yet we must remember that his work was conducted well over a decade before the Folk-Song Society issued their guide to collectors: indeed, there was no such Society to issue it. Folk-song is by definition in oral transmission, but the point at which simple transmission instead becomes collection had yet to be defined.

But even contemporary criteria, on which Baring Gould must have based his criticism, had evidently been infringed to some degree. Kidson appears to have blurred the distinctions between collection and collation, acting on the principle that any previously unpublished material which appeared in the book had thereby become 'his'.

The potential for such conceptual difficulties is inherent in the practice of seeking contributors: Kidson, as the collector, effectively collects from other collectors, rather than from any perceived 'tradition'. Even in the 'rescue' of old airs from the 'retentive memories' (1891:v,vi) of people such as Holgate and Holmes, is it not implicit that they have already been the collectors of them?

If we look again at the song which Kidson obtained from Hewson, we see that it was 'commonly sung ... between 1820 and 1840', and 'The version of the song and air is here given as it was sung by a follower of the Cheshire hounds during that period' (1891:143). If Hewson felt young

enough in 1906 to leave the employment of Leeds Corporation in order to enter private practice [*see above*], then 1840 must have been long before his birth. If Kidson's assertions are to be regarded as factual, the song must already have been recorded in some way by someone else. Like the 'classic British example' of Mrs. Brown of Falkland - no peasant, but a professor's daughter (Burke, 1978:74) - Hewson was a mediator.

So whilst Kidson was content to follow the convention of describing untutored country singers 'of great age and quavering voices' as the last custodians of the traditional 'ditties' which he sought (1891:v,xii,xiv), he also recognised that he was at least as likely to get old songs from fellow antiquarians, or people of an antiquarian bent, as the rural cottage-dweller.

He had almost said as much in an article (*The Summer Morning*, January 1887) from the *Notes on Old Tunes* series which appeared in the *Leeds Mercury Supplement*. Kidson judged it fortunate that such people as Herd, Scott, Hogg and Motherwell had been able to 'step in just at the right time' to 'rescue' the material which now formed the ballad collections. He had recently been in Liddesdale, the scene of Walter Scott's ballad hunts and 'the richest ballad district of England or Scotland', yet 'not a single memory or tradition seemed to linger among the inhabitants'.

Clearly such people as Holgate and Teasdale failed to meet up to the rustic ideal. Kidson seems to have recognised this incongruity, and decided that the best way

to counter it was to provide minimal information about those who supplied him with songs. The reader's imagination would be left to provide the detail which 'reality' could not.

Even Lolley did not have immunity from this kind of attention. Although he had held managerial status for two years when Kidson wrote to Broadwood about him (*see above* [14.05.1893]), his rustic credentials were accentuated not only by repeated reference to the 'old country inn', but by Kidson's persistence in describing him as 'a bricklayer'. Of all the early collectors, Kidson was the best placed to have appreciated the distinction.

It is however likely that the fine detail of provenance was not at the front of Kidson's mind in his compilation of *Traditional Tunes*. The main criterion was the 'saving' or 'rescue' of hitherto unpublished material, with particular emphasis placed on the tunes. His view of the relative worth of tune to words, and justification for collecting them, is stated concisely in the advertisement for the projected 'Collection of Ballad Tunes' [*Traditional Tunes*] which appeared at the end of *Old English Country Dances*:

> However trivial the words may be, it will in general be found that the airs are very beautiful, and have a quaintness and simplicity directly their own. They were the delight of our forefathers, and it is as well that while there is some chance of saving them they should not be entirely lost sight of (1890).

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Whilst *Traditional Tunes* would become well known amongst folk-song scholars - as a pioneer work, its importance was necessarily retrospective - it is worth bearing in mind that it was published in a limited edition of only 200 copies at Kidson's own expense. How many of these were sold is difficult to ascertain. There must have been a number of presentation copies, such as that now in the University of Leeds Library. Since there were only two medals to distribute at the Kendal Folk-Song competition that year, *The Westmorland Gazette* of 12th. April 1902 reported that Kidson, as adjudicator, had offered the other four competitors copies of 'a small book on traditional tunes which he thought perhaps might interest them'. Again, some two and a half decades after the publication of *Traditional Tunes*, in writing (18.01.1915) to congratulate Lucy Broadwood on her contributions to that year's number of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, Kidson says

> I see you mention my *Traditional Tunes* a great deal. The book is of course long 'out of print' so far as booksellers are concerned but I have some spare copies by me if you know of any body who has been sighing in vain for it.

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Kidson's collecting subsequent to *Traditional Tunes*

Although the manuscript material on which *Traditional Tunes* was based has been lost, a number of manuscript books are held in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. These contain further tunes and songs collected by Kidson and his associates from what was at least thought of as oral tradition.

Palmer (1986[a]:3) identifies five such volumes, one of which (M18061) can immediately be discounted because it consists solely of transcriptions which Kidson has made from other sources.

There is a book of *Children's Tunes* (M10056), and two entitled *Traditional Tunes* (M18057 and M18058). Palmer believes that Kidson made fair copies of the material contained in these three volumes in a further two, of which only the second (*Traditional Tunes, Book II* (M18060)) survives. Palmer's *Checklist of Manuscript Songs and Tunes collected ... by Frank Kidson* (1986[a]) has been compiled from these four manuscript volumes, providing lists of both informants and manuscript songs and tunes.

Amongst such familiar names as Lolley, Holgate, Teasdale and Wardill, we find contributions from T.C. Smith of Scarborough, Kate Thompson of Knaresborough, and Alf Mooney of Liverpool, besides many others whose names appear but once or twice. Some of the entries are dated, but because they were either copied or bound up at some later date, chronological order is not necessarily followed: some of the songs collected from Kate Thompson, for instance,

appear in reverse date order (M18058). The material has mainly been gathered between the late 1880s and the turn of the century, by which time Kidson's collecting career had effectively drawn to a close; to be resumed, if only in a small way, when he was invited to adjudicate at various Folk Song Competitions. This aspect of his career will receive more detailed consideration in due course.

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Kidson was to publish a selection from his collection in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* in 1904, and again in 1906. The 1904 set comprised twenty seven items, plus variants. Six had been contributed by Miss Carr Moseley, who stated that they had been 'sung by an old lady born in 1800 or 1801, who heard them from her mother, who, in turn, knew them as a child' (1904:242). Since Miss Carr Moseley was a founder member of the Folk-Song Society who stood unsuccessfully for the Committee when Vaughan Williams was elected in June 1904 (*Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, vol. 2, no. 6, 1905:xii), we must again question why these songs appear in Kidson's collection.

Alfred Moffat contributed a song, which had been sent to him from Dundee by someone who had noted it down from 'a vagabond singer' (1904:245). Lolley provided three, including a tune which he had 'noted down from a man's whistling' (1904:238).

Sixteen had been collected by Kidson himself. He had noted seven of these from the singing of Mrs. Kate Thompson, 'whose memory was once well stored with

traditional songs learnt principally at Knaresborough' (1904:244). We subsequently learn from the *Introduction* to the 1906 collection that Mrs. Thompson had been '[o]ur old servant' (1906:250); possibly between 1891 and 1897 if the songs in M18058 (pp. 5,19,20-4,28,31,36,43,47,50,54) were collected during her employment.

Kidson appears to have habitually taken the opportunity of collecting from the family servants. Maggie Calvert, who had - as already related - been brought to Leeds from Eskdale (Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:61-2), provided two songs for M18058 (pp. 4-5). Kidson also recorded in the same volume (p. 6) a song that 'when a boy' he had heard sung by Anna Sampson, referred to by Ethel as his parents' 'Yorkshire servant' ([?]1926:28).

Sometimes the *Journal* notes can be supplemented by information provided in the manuscript volumes. Another of Kidson's finds was *Robin Hood and the Keeper*, noted from 'the singing of a farmer near Huddersfield' (1904:247). Page 65 of M18058 tells us that his name was Edward Kaye. If we look similarly at *The Sword-dancer's Song*, which 'was given to me by a 'pleugh stot' who had enacted the part of the 'maiden'' (1904:251), we find that this person was none other than Alan Wardill, from whom the tune was collected in May 1895 (M18058:50). Kidson would later write in the *Introduction* to his *Old Country Dances and Morris Tunes* ([?]1912) that 'The writer has had many humorous descriptions of the frolics of a party of plough stotters from one who dressed up as the 'maiden''. The observance in

Goathland of Plough Monday, incidentally, had lapsed in the 1870s, and would not be revived until 1922 (Ridden, 1974:353).

The last two of this selection were from the Kendal Folk-Song Competition of 1904; an event to which we shall return in *Chapter 6*.

In his *Introduction* to the 1906 set, Kidson mentions that they had been gathered 'some ten or twelve years ago' [they date between 1888 (no. 36) and 1903 (no. 33)], for inclusion in the projected second series of *Traditional Tunes*. He still has 'a large number' unpublished, which he hopes 'may shortly see the light, either in volume form or in the pages of the *Journal*' (1906:250). As it transpired, no further material from Kidson's collection would appear in print from that time until the last year of his life.

This selection comprised 40 collected variants under 32 titles, together with two folk tales. Contributions (3) from Kidson's 'good friend Mr. Charles Lolley' are again featured, as well as one each from the Rev. Capel Cure and Mr. G. Rathbone [one of the officials of the Kendal Festival], noted down in Dorsetshire and Westmoreland respectively, whilst Alfred Moffat has submitted a tune which he noted from the playing of a 'gypsy piper' in Scotland.

Kidson mentions that 'The late T.C. Smith, of Scarborough, took up the subject on my behalf, and, about ten years ago, noted tunes from fishermen and others possessed of folk-songs in his district'. There are seven

contributions from Smith, including two variants of the same song. We can surmise that Kidson had not been in close contact with Smith, but not, evidently, on account of the latter's death. Kidson subsequently received a letter from Smith, and in a note (dated May 1907) which appeared in the next issue of the *Journal* wrote 'I am exceedingly glad to hear on such good authority that my old and valued correspondent is still alive, and has the same keen interest in folk-song as of yore'. It appears likely that Kidson never met Smith, who is referred to in Kidson's *Yorkshire Christmas Carols* article (21.12.1907) simply as a 'correspondent'.

As to material obtained from Kidson's own collecting, he has supplemented Smith's North Yorkshire songs 'with some which I heard near Whitby', whilst others have been 'taken down from Leeds people, and several from Irish wanderers or 'out-o'-works' with whom I have come into casual contact' (1906:250).

As usual, Kidson does not always provide sufficient information for the reader to identify his informants, so any significant supplementary information obtained from the manuscripts will appear in parentheses.

Amongst the material collected from people who appear to have been residents of the Leeds district, we find four songs from Kate Thompson: two from a lady who had come from Nottingham (Miss Jackson): one each from Mrs. Hollings, a charwoman, who had lived in Lincolnshire as a child; Mr. Anderson of Leeds; Mr. Clarke of Wortley; Mr. Dickinson,

senior, a Yorkshireman, of Leeds, from whom Kidson obtained *The Isle of France;* his son Charley, 'A Young Sailor'; Horbury (Mr. Leader); Mr. Frank Kelly, 'A Native of Ireland'; 'A Street-Singer in Leeds' (an Irish out of work); and an old Irishman singing in the streets of Leeds.

Although she does not name him, we learn from Ethel Kidson that the elder Mr. Dickinson was himself a street musician. Long after Frank Kidson's death she provided the following narrative:

> Uncle also had the habit of speaking to all street musicians. In those days there were many men who played the tin whistle in the streets, many of them very well indeed, and they were always a pleasure to us both. He would bring them in and talk to them of tunes old and new. I recall him bringing in a man who was playing the whistle in the street and saying to him, "You play very well, what is your trade?" The man said, "I have been a sailor". He bared his wrist and said to me "You see Miss", showing many tattoo marks. At last Uncle got from him 'The Isle of France.' The man said "I've seen the tears running down from my Captain's eyes when we sang that song" ... (1948:129).

Apparently Kidson would first give 'a good dinner' to any such singer he brought home (letter to Lucy Broadwood, 9.1.1898).

Moving further afield, Kidson had collected one from a sailor's daughter, at Whitby (Mrs. Agar); one from Knaresborough (Mrs. Corker); one from Goathland (A. Wardill); and one from Miss A. Bownass of Windermere at the 1903 Kendal Festival.

Four had come from Mr. A. Mooney, of Liverpool, where part of the Kidson family lived. It is left to Cowell, with her family connections, to tell us that Alfred Mooney was

related to Kidson. Ethel Kidson's brother Alfred, an engine driver on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, was a friend of Mooney, employed as a clerk by the same company. Alfred Kidson introduced Mooney to his other sister, Catherine, and they were married around 1896 (1988:484). Also in Liverpool Kidson had noted a song from 'An Irishman', one from W.H. Lunt, and two from 'an old Lancashire woman' who seems to have had some connection with Lunt (1906:285,287,290-1).

The selection was concluded by two folk tales, one of which was collected from Ethel Kidson, and the other from Kate Thompson.

Again in this selection we encounter the problem of whose 'collection' the material actually forms part. Tunes will have 'Noted by Mr. C. Lolley', or 'Noted by T.C. Smith' rather than 'Noted by F. Kidson' under the title; but this will be within sections entitled 'Irish Tunes ...', 'Sailor Songs ...', or 'Yorkshire Tunes Collected by Frank Kidson'. There is even a section entitled 'Scotch Tune Collected by Frank Kidson', where the single item featured is marked 'Noted by Mr. Alfred Moffat'.

Again, it would seem that Mooney collected *Shule Agra* when he heard it 'while walking in Scotland Road, behind a Liverpool basket-girl, who with her companions was singing the verse to the tune'. It is recorded instead as Kidson having collected it when Mooney sang it, in turn, to him (1906:253). Mooney actually noted down the air and a portion of the first verse of *The Peelers and the Goat* from

'an Irishman', but it is still credited as 'Noted by F. Kidson: Sung by Mr. A. Mooney, Liverpool' (1906:259).

In the *Introduction* to his selection in the 1906 edition of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, Kidson acknowledged that since a decade had elapsed between the collection of these airs and their publication, some of his tunes might be 'a little stale', particularly on account of 'the impetus that the birth of the Folk-Song Society' had given to collecting (1906:250).

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This chapter has outlined those early experiences of folk-song collection which would subsequently justify Kidson's pioneer status in this endeavour. Again working, as in the preceding chapter, for his own interest - and incidentally to his vocation as a landscape painter - Kidson became part of a developing network of pioneer enthusiasts.

Through such antiquarian 'scholarly interest', pioneers both explore and map out the cultural territory on which the legislator will in due course operate. As Lucy Broadwood would recall, they were 'unconsciously giving impetus to that public movement for popularising English folk-song and dance which Cecil Sharp was to start' (01.01.1927:43).

The pioneers determined and refined the nature of folk-song discourse, establishing what might be included or excluded, highlighted or marginalised. Edward Thomas' letter to Lucy Broadwood showed that the criteria governing

such a construct were already in popular currency by 1893. In relation to the perceived desirability - or otherwise - of adopting the practice of seeking contributors, we have seen how discourse and practice were both contested and refined.

Kidson's appreciation of an established 'ideal' in the compilation of an 'authentic' volume of folk-songs - field collection from rural dwellers - resulted in his presenting the material which comprised *Traditional Tunes* in a manner calculated to meet both this ideal and the expectations of the reader. His selective use of ancillary information ensured that even late twentieth century scholars continued to be at least misled.

The next chapter considers the institutionalisation of folk-song which paralleled the growing international interest in it. We shall also see how folk-song was adopted as a kind of cultural raw material, as orientations towards it began to accommodate future as well as past.

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Chapter 5: NATIONAL MUSIC AND THE FOLKSONG SOCIETY

> *Frank Kidson and others formed the English Folk-Song Society in 1898 and set folk-songs on the firm foundation of public favour* (*Yorkshire Evening News*, 20.04.1933).

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As the new century approached, the relative emphasis which Kidson placed on his different activities changed. Painting and song collecting gave way to historical research and writing, as he concentrated his efforts on gathering the material which would eventually comprise *British Music Publishers*.

At the time of his writing to Lucy Broadwood on 9th. January 1898, Kidson's recent experience of collecting from the oral tradition seems to have been limited to chance encounters with street performers [30.7.1897 and October 1897 (M18058:55,57)]. But interest in such material was becoming more widespread, and Kidson's recognition as a pioneer collector was demonstrated by an item from that day's post. He informed her that

> I have received today (probably at your suggestion) a circular about a proposed Folk Song Society. Such a Society, worked on proper lines, would be a capital idea but its success & its usefulness would greatly depend on the managing committee & their earnestness. I trust that you will be on this committee as your absolute knowledge of the subject would stand in such good stead. I shall be glad to belong to the Society if the subscription is not excessive.

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The postmodern era is understood as the era of re-evaluation of modernity, permitting a retrospective condensation of the modern mode of existence into a project of modernity whose imputed intentions and ascribed consequences are thereby exposed to examination. *Chapters 3* and *4* have considered Kidson's pioneering activities in relation to both printed and orally transmitted music. In the light of this re-evaluation, Kidson's pioneer work must be viewed as elements of the modern project.

Since there is no single 'modern', but rather a plurality of modernisms, each with its own specific national characteristics and significance, we might expect to find counterparts for Kidson and his associates in other nations. Indeed, the work of both Hroch and Gramsci [*discussed in Chapter 2*] confirms their existence.

Chapter 5 - intended principally to provide an introduction to the legislative phase - begins with an examination of the concept of 'national' music as a characteristic and representative attribute of the nation.

All discussion of national music in the 'modern' world necessarily begins with Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). We examine the particular context which framed Herder's ideas on national culture and convinced him that a nation's high culture must of necessity be rooted in that of the folk.

As Herder's ideas circulated and were adapted, it became accepted that the folk culture of all nations, including putative nations, embodied the 'national spirit'.

So not only was a folk culture exclusive to a particular nation: it could be exploited in furthering the specific interests of that same nation. The enlistment of music to the national cause was clearly an imperative.

In the light of the sudden proliferation of national musics in Europe, the realisation that this attribute was one which England appeared to lack caused concern. We look at initial attempts to investigate, if perhaps not yet remedy, this perceived deficiency.

Because that nation had provided the catalyst for Herder's ideas on national culture, we consider the creation of a Latvian high culture as an illustration of one of the politically motivated European folk revivals. The creation of the Folk-Song Society represented the start of institutionalised attempts to develop an English national music through the exploitation of indigenous material. The context for subsequent legislative activity was thereby established. Kidson, meanwhile, was recruited to the Folk-Song Society on account of the authority derived from his pioneer activity.

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Although there undoubtedly existed a range of opinions over what properly constituted National Music, it was generally accepted that whilst other nations might possess this attribute, it was one which England conspicuously lacked.

By the nineteenth century, an international élite had been created on the basis of a standardised international

culture. Yet this conflicted with nationalism, another fundamental of modernity. As the century passed, the application of 'induced aesthetic value' (Rahn, 1994:55) ensured that a country's music became a political ideology through laying stress on national characteristics, and appearing as representative of the nation (Adorno, 1976:155).

Yet in England, music had been seen as 'essentially alien', since 'foreigners composed music, and had a monopoly of its performance' (Stradling and Hughes, 1993:12). This grievance had a long pedigree: in his Preface to *Love in a Riddle* (1729), Colley Cibber had, for instance, complained of 'the decay of English music owing to foreign influences' (Scott, 1926:vii); a process which can only have been exacerbated in the succeeding century, when music was far from 'the correct thing among the 'upper ten'' (Lightwood, 1912:viii).

Now music in England was no longer sufficient: there had to be an English music, too. Its perceived absence, amongst a proliferation of national musics, began to take the appearance of a serious national deficiency. The emergence of the Folk-Song Society, as one of a range of measures designed to remedy the situation, is reflective of this concern.

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Discussion of national music in the English context is invariably traced back to Carl Engel's *Introduction to the Study of National Music*, published in 1866. Engel was born

near Hanover in 1818, and received piano lessons from Hummel. He moved to England in his late thirties, beginning a collection of rare instruments and books which eventually formed a private museum and library that 'could hardly be rivalled except by a few public institutions' (Grove, 1912:I:779). Besides string chamber music, Engel's library mainly comprised books on musical theory and works relating to folk music, especially of the Slavonic countries.

Engel assisted the South Kensington (now Victoria and Albert) Museum in the formation of their own collection of rare musical instruments, subsequently publishing the catalogue which he had prepared for them. The late Victorians possessed a distinct propensity to embark on impossibly grandiose literary ventures: we have already considered those undertaken by both Fenteman and Kidson, and it might be mentioned that Sherlock Holmes planned to devote his 'declining years' to the composition of a textbook which would 'focus the whole art of detection into one volume' (Conan Doyle, 1928:834). It is, therefore, no surprise to find that despite having filled four 'thick' quarto volumes in manuscript, and prepared over 800 drawings, Engel's projected definitive account of the musical instruments of the whole world was never completed. Whilst his publications were almost exclusively confined to matters of musical history, he differed from many musical antiquarians in being equally familiar with the works of Schumann, Brahms, and other 'modern' composers (Hyatt King, 1963:64; Grove, 1912:I:779-80).

Johann Gottfried Herder

Engel's views on national music had their ultimate origin in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803). Herder was a German teacher and pastor who lived in the Hanseatic city of Riga, now capital of the republic of Latvia, between 1764 and 1769 (Barnard, 1965:xii). Here, Herder was said to have acquired direct experience of that 'still-living past' which inspired his new interpretation of primitive and popular poetry (Gillies, 1945:14).

In Herder's time almost the whole territory of present-day Latvia had been absorbed into the Russian empire. Yet the German ruling class was largely left in charge of the land, administration, judiciary, church and education. The Latvians were therefore subjected to a double colonisation, since the positional superiority enjoyed by the Germans ensured that 'socio-economic equivalences were established on the tautological axiom that a peasant was a Latvian, and a Latvian was a peasant' (Silenieks, 1973:57).

The Lutheran church, which Herder represented, held that preaching should be conducted in the mother tongue of the congregation. G.F. Stender (1714-1796) had produced both a Latvian Grammar and a Latvian Dictionary in order to induce German clerics to acquire a better knowledge of the Latvian language, and by this means, the clergy developed an interest in the culture of the Latvian peasantry.

Herder had been influenced in these matters by his fellow Prussians J.G. Hamann, A.W. Hupel and K. Harder, the

latter being author of an essay about ancient Latvian cults and rituals, customs and crafts. Herder, who coined the term *Volksleid*, gave particular attention to the *dainas* or Latvian folk songs. His influence was such that interest in the *dainas* spread as far as Britain, where Sir Walter Scott would contribute an article on this subject to the *Foreign Quarterly Review* in 1831 (Baumanis, 1946).

Since Stender, through publishing a volume of moralistic tales in 1766, had also been the founder of Latvian secular literature, the *dainas* had necessarily been handed down entirely through the oral tradition, of which they formed the major component. Through equating this popular tradition of an ethnic community with a national consciousness, suppressed over the centuries by foreign domination, Herder came to believe that the *dainas* contained the essence, or soul, of the Latvian nation.

The themes used in the *dainas* are largely concerned with the turning points in peasant life: birth, courting, marriage, the change of season, and death (Plakans, 1969:63). In the absence of any other framework for a cohesive world outlook, they have been claimed to give a vivid description of the social, cultural, and religious life of the ancient Latvians, and even their philosophy of life from the cradle to the grave (Sinka, 1988:8; Straumanis, 1979:47). Indeed, the Latvian poet Auseklis (Krogzemju Mikus, 1850-1879) came to believe that, as a codification of Latvian identity, analysis of the *dainas* would produce all the evidence needed to reconstruct

ancient Latvian society (Plakans, 1969:160).

The notion that lives are turned around by significant events, or 'epiphanies', is deeply entrenched in Western thought, and holds a particular appeal for biographers. Their texts are commonly structured according to the 'significant, turning-point moments in a subject's life', where some 'transformation' can be attributed directly to the experience. Convention dictates that these events are often moments of crisis, altering 'the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life' (Denzin, 1989:33,70).

Referring directly to the sun-festival celebrations which he had witnessed at the estate of a Riga friend near Jägelsee on St. John's Eve in 1765, Herder wrote of his own epiphany:

> ... I have had the opportunity of seeing the living remains of this ancient nation keeping alive their uncultivated singing, rhythms and dancing - people whom our customs have been unable completely to deprive of their own language, songs and customs in order to replace all these with something that is very much distorted ([*adapted from*] Meinecke, 1972:305; Andrups and Kalve, 1954:83; Gillies, 1945:43 [*footnote* 1]).

This picture of national life and culture among the Latvians led Herder on to wider consideration of the nation in general. In the Latvians and Baltic Germans he recognised in bodily form the clash between Rousseau's two spheres of nature and civilisation. The pressures exerted on a small subjugated people by a large ruling nation led Herder to ponder how long Latvian popular culture, with its own language, songs, and customs, could last in the face of external influence. This theme of the suppression of small

nationalities would achieve greater prominence in Herder's later writings (Meinecke, 1972:305,308).

His ideas spread rapidly and widely, and were soon considered to be of potentially universal application. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, for instance, identifies a 'general awakening of the desire for national identity in America' during the period from 1815 to 1835. Both a national culture and national history were created within these two decades, and the goal of an American national consciousness and ideology achieved. The adoption of Herder by the New England transcendentalists, and the fact that many young Americans studied at German universities following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, were central to this process. Indeed the principal choice for the latter was the University of Göttingen, where Heyne, Eichhorn and Heeren, its 'most illustrious representatives', were 'close personal friends and intellectual companions of Herder's' (1990:415-7).

Herder's reading, as a young man, has been described as 'gigantic', and the English Pre-Romantics were to be a continuing influence in his intellectual development. In 1765, and through translations, Herder became partially acquainted with James Macpherson's Ossianic poems, which had first appeared in three volumes between 1760 and 1763. The collection constituted two epics and twenty shorter pieces, all purporting to be translations from the Gaelic original of the Celtic bard Ossian, the son of Fingal, who had lived in the third century.

The favourable attitude which then existed in English literary circles towards primitive poetry ensured that their authenticity was not immediately challenged: they were a representation of exactly what was expected. Indeed, it is recognised that forgeries only become readily apparent after the cultural context which produced them has passed (BBC R3, 2.4.1996), and the Ossian poems are now generally accepted to be carefully constructed originals that Macpherson himself had created, with a possibly genuine but very slender basis in real folk literature. Although Clark concedes that some part of the basic material may have been Ossianic in origin, the largest item, the epic *Fingal*, is 'a highly dubious production' (1955:144).

Influenced by his friend Goethe, Herder became absorbed in English literature and, in his own words, 'more and more British' at this time (Gillies, 1945:41). As the archetypical primitive poet, Ossian held a strong fascination, particularly in relation to national peculiarities. Herder's interest was rooted in the supposed fact that

> Ossian's poems are songs, folksongs, songs of an uncultured, emotional people, which have sung their way down the ages on the lips of native tradition ([*quoted in*] Gillies, 1945:44 [*footnote* 1]).

Herder's Ossian essay, *Correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples*, was written in the summer of 1771, several months before Goethe sent him an English text. Goethe had even studied the language to enable him to

translate some of Macpherson's sparse Celtic fragments, and these translations were made available to Herder at the same time (Clark, 1955:146).

The essay had immediate impact in making the German world conscious of its own folk-song heritage, and - although Herder would become increasingly 'out of sympathy' with what he saw as their 'excesses' - effectively served as the manifesto of the *Sturm und Drang* movement (Gillies, 1945:42; Branscombe, 1980:504).

Yet since Herder's view of Ossian had been based entirely on translations, it was necessarily 'imperfect and second-hand'. Mediated through the 'emotional ferment' which Herder, as a highly imaginative person, endured, the result was inevitably 'an idealized vision' of Ossian (1945:41). Herder himself considered the essay to be out of date even at the time of publication (Clark, 1955:155).

Reading Percy's *Reliques* that same summer helped Herder to both complete his Ossian essay, and resolve his thoughts on Shakespeare. Since he relied primarily on Wieland's 'romantic' translation, Herder's knowledge of the bard was 'almost as defective as his knowledge of Ossian' (1945:45-6). He concluded that Shakespeare had used popular ballads and traditions, folksongs and romances, as the bases of his work; indeed, since his plays were simply dramatisations of lyrical romances, Shakespeare's whole achievement had grown out of such origins.

Herder had now become convinced that everything was *Volkslied* or *Nationallied.* Shakespeare was a poet of the

people, expressing its thoughts and its sentiments; his work was a development of elementary folksong beginnings, just as that of Sophocles was. Even the Creation story in the book of Genesis could, he believed, be shown to have developed out of a number of primitive folksongs.

Herder believed that poetry was a universal gift, not the monopoly of any one people. Greece and Rome no longer held special authority: Ossian was quite the equal of Homer. Herder sought to establish why, despite racial affinities and common origins in mythology and language, English literature flourished, whilst German did not. His study of English literature and drama revealed to him that it had both based itself on, and drawn from, the popular material of the Middle Ages. In consequence, it was independent and original, imitating nothing outside itself, having both a native origin and a native purpose.

German literature had failed to do this, and in consequence entirely lost touch with its primitive native material. The English poetic tradition had proved sufficiently robust to resist deflection in the Renaissance, which it had instead assimilated. By contrast, the German context revealed an irreparable breach between the present and its own national past. The loss of Charles the Great's folksong collection, the Latin domination of German culture in the Middle Ages, followed by the Renaissance and the Wars of Religion, had all helped to exacerbate this situation.

The only remedy was to go back to where the tradition

had been broken: folksong provided the link in which the native medieval tradition lived on. This was the path which other countries had followed, and it had led to greatness. So, '[t]he German should not strive to produce the cedars of Lebanon, the vines of Greece or the laurels of Greece, but content himself with the crab-apples of his own sacred forests' ([*quoted in*] Meinecke, 1972:309). It was evident to him that a German Shakespeare could only be born out of German folksong, and Herder was determined to bring about in contemporary Germany a set of literary conditions similar to those of Elizabethan England. He complained:

> ... from ancient times, we have absolutely no living poetic literature upon which our modern poetry might grow, as a branch upon the national stem; whereas other nations have progressed with the centuries, and have shaped themselves upon their own soil, from native products, upon the belief and taste of the people, from the remains of the past. In that way their literature and language have become national, the voice of the people has been used and cherished, they have secured far more of a public in these matters than we Germans have ([*quoted in*] Gillies, 1945:52 [*footnote* 1]).

In the conclusion to his Ossian essay, Herder called for the collection of German folk songs. They were at hand, and needed only to be collected, in order that German literature might become conscious of itself.

These songs of the past, embodying national traditions, sentiments, and interests, must be the foundation for the future. As he made clear in relation to his own *Volkslieder* anthology of 1778-9, folksongs were to be regarded more as providing materials for poetry, than as poetry themselves.

The English context

Engel now promoted the application in England of national romantic ideas which had been partially developed from Herder's study of English literature. Folk-song was still of central consideration in relation to national culture, but the emphasis placed on its constituent parts had changed, at least in the English context. It was accepted that the melody was also inherently imbued with the national spirit, and whilst the words of songs were of paramount importance to Herder as the foundation of a German literature, attention would be focused much less in England on the lyrical aspect than the melodic. After all, no one could doubt that England was in possession of a national literature, but there was much less evidence of that national music, which, in Engel's definition,

> exhibits certain peculiarities more or less characteristic, [and] which distinguish it from the music of any other nation ... (1866:1).

Should such a music actually exist in England, Engel had no doubts as to where it could be found. As he explained,

> In civilised countries where the art of music is scientifically cultivated, and where it has attained a high degree of development, we find, as might be expected, the characteristic peculiarities of the National music most strictly preserved among the less educated classes ... (1866:3).

By virtue of the education which they had received, the higher classes within a nation could be expected to display similar traits to those of the educated classes of other civilised nations. In consequence, as 'the peculiar

manners, customs and prejudices of a nation' were more strictly adhered to by the 'common' people, 'genuine' specimens of National music were most likely to be found among 'the working classes, the artisans, the field labourers, and the country people in general'.

Whilst music was a universal language, many dialects were nevertheless present within it, Engel believed. The particular character of a national music would be influenced by such factors as climate, the habits and occupations of the people, and even their diet. Yet however devoid of expression and beauty it might seem to anyone else, a national music would have a particular resonance for those who claimed it as their own (1866:3-4,167-8).

Despite their inherent differences on the international level, national tunes would invariably possess two distinctive characteristics. The first of these was that the identity of their composer would 'seldom' be known. The second concerned the development and modification which a song underwent in usage, until it achieved 'general favourable acceptance by the nation to whom it appertains'. Indeed, such modifications would invariably be improvements, since 'the taste of the people collectively is usually healthy and judicious' (1866:12,13).

A school inspector named T.W.M. Marshall had, in 1853, suggested that 'a fair number' of good songs were 'handed on among the poor chiefly by oral tradition, and ... exist wholly independently of the *musical profession*'

(Mackerness, 1964:159). Yet, in Engel's estimation, England did not appear to be well placed in such matters. There was, for instance, no nineteenth century collection of English national tunes which could be consulted 'with confidence'. Furthermore, the rural population of England appeared to sing less than those of most other European countries. Engel was nevertheless prepared to grant the likelihood that

> They also, especially in districts somewhat remote from any large towns, must still preserve songs and dance-tunes of their own, inherited from their forefathers (1866:173).

In his own experience, German peasant girls would begin singing to the collector with 'some new operatic melody' which had found its way from the town, in the conviction that the most fashionable tune would be the most acceptable. But if the collector probed deeper, 'rich harvests' might be gathered by those 'who understood how to find the hidden places where they have grown up'. This had happened in other countries which were formerly thought to possess few national songs. Engel's clear inference was that this might be the case in England as well (1866:199), but for some two decades his suggestion went unheeded.

The Musical Association

That the question of National Music gradually began to attract serious attention cannot be doubted. Indeed, since the implication that an English national music had at one time existed is inherent in it, the whole concept of Musical Renaissance is impossible to separate from it. The theorists of the Renaissance explored national music in all

its aspects: how it might be developed, how it could have been lost, and how it might be restored. The Musical Association (founded 1874) provided them with the perfect forum to discuss it (*Grove*, 1910:III:335-6).

As early as 1891, the same year in which *Traditional Tunes* was published, Webb, in his paper entitled *The Foundations of National Music*, had identified folk-song as one of the most important musical influences. All the greatest composers had drawn their inspiration from such material, which could "fairly claim to be the vital principle in the music of all nations". Indeed, without the benefit of its spirit, "the most elaborate works are but mere lifeless monuments of human industry and misdirected energy" (1891:121).

The many distinct peculiarities found in the music of various nations derived from attributes of national character, which in turn could be ascribed to racial differences. Webb cited Huxley, Grimm and Engel in support of his thesis that communal development guaranteed this exclusive quality in national melody (1891:113-4).

Webb considered the history of prominent national schools of Music. These schools had culminated in the Italian, "which originated everything and perfected nothing", and the German, "who developed what the Italians had invented". In recent times, Englishmen had resorted to German models to convey their thoughts; but this was only a natural consequence of having sent "all our best musical youth" to Germany. Perhaps more on the basis of wishful

thinking than concrete evidence, he asserted that the future belonged to "the English school of today" (1891:121,126).

A distinctive English style in music existed, thought Webb, and indeed had done for centuries. This conviction was, after all, at the heart of the notion of an English "Renaissance". This style was as characteristic of national temperament as that of any other nation, but had been ignored "because until lately we thought slightingly of the art, and in our brutal strength associated it with effeminacy" (1891:125).

As far as Webb was concerned, the ordinary Englishman was characterised by a "well balanced mind which regards everything in an intensely practical light", and a hatred of display, extravagance, and impulsiveness. Yet the English were also "magnanimous and chivalrous, ... emotional on social subjects, patriotic and home-loving". The music of such a people should be

> [j]ust what it is; good, honest, bold, straightforward strains, rich in melody, and breathing strong, healthy, human affection or simple-hearted gaiety, but innocent alike of exaggerated sentimentality, intellectual subtleties, or maddening mysticism (1891:125).

During the period from 1900 to 1905, Mrs. Henry [Rosa] Newmarch gave a series of five papers on *The Development of National Opera in Russia*. As she made clear in the second lecture, her theme was

> the innate musical genius of the Russian people, and of their blind, instinctive groping towards a desired end - the foundation of a *School of National Music* (1902:67).

As a nation which had already developed its characteristic national style, Russia was held up as a model to be emulated. England likewise needed composers worthy of international recognition, yet whose compositions were unmistakably redolent of the national spirit. After all, as Newmarch pointed out in the last lecture of the series,

> ... what is gained by substituting a British trade-mark for a foreign one, if the article manufactured does not bear the genuine stamp of nationality? (1905:112).

England had already produced a 'National Style-Builder', Charles Maclean contended in his paper. Arthur Sullivan had shown that "works of the highest class in a variety of departments of strictly modern art can be written with strictly English materials" (1902:100).

Maclean acknowledged the tendency in England to believe that the idea of national style in art-music was a "fallacy", on the basis that such music was cosmopolitan. Certain, almost exclusively German, composers were treated as "classical", whilst those excluded from this élite were necessarily seen as inferior. Yet in his view, "the facts" made such a theory untenable. The "absurd" and "unscientific" elevation of a single school had obscured the true basis of classification, which was nationality.

Indeed, looking to the European situation, "current observation of actual facts" demonstrated that rather than developing a "general eclectic and cosmopolitan style", the "best" composers in each country seemed to be "clearly differentiating themselves in obedience to some law of

national characteristics". By way of proof, Maclean would

> ... merely point by name to Russia, Poland, South Italy, North Italy, Switzerland, Spain, France, Belgium, Scandinavia, and ask whether any one can mistake the style of one for the other? (1902:89-90).

The political changes which took place in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century had provided the catalyst for this "impulse", which England had been slow to obey. Yet under the guidance of her best composers, "she has been learning to hatch her own eggs, in lieu of the cuckoo eggs of a foreign style or styles" (1902:90).

The duty of the composer was "to build up the national musical style of his country". In order to achieve this, he needed both "original power within himself", and "national underlying and half-declared musical traits or propensities as raw material to work upon". The "national crude-material" could be found to a small extent in church music, but more characteristically in "the natural and spontaneous short outpourings" of the people. Such material, whilst not being directly copied by the composer, would act as "a general mould to influence his musical thoughts". In Europe, "the national art-style of each country has more and more been determined in the last resort by the character of its folk-songs" (1902:90-1), which in Germany were "historically and philosophically ... the foundation of their art" (1902:92).

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> *... if we judge from the analogy of other countries, there can be no vigorous school of national music that does not draw life and inspiration from the folk-songs of the nation* (H.R. Reichel, 1906:18).

The desire and impetus for a characteristic national music derived largely from the recognition that whilst this attribute was seemingly absent from the English context, it was already enjoyed by other European nations. Moreover, since possession of a high culture derived from the national could provide support for a claim to political independence, even putative nations were at a more advanced stage than England in such matters. Because it had provided the catalyst for Herder's ideas on national culture, we will return at this point to consider the Latvian situation.

Late nineteenth century Latvia held the status of a Russian province. Serfdom had been abolished by 1820, beginning a period of reform which culminated in the right to buy land, facilitated by the provision of bank loans, in the middle of the century. This became a key determinant in the establishment of an indigenous middle class, providing the basis for the development of an intellectual elite, and promoting closer economic ties between the previously isolated districts of Latvia.

A further reform in the period between 1816 and 1820 had placed responsibility for local affairs in the hands of the peasantry. This had the effect of raising the status of the language; the ability to express the 'complexities of government' made it appear less a peasant tongue than one

which 'held substantial promise as a vehicle for expressing high culture' (Plakans, 1981:217). As a parallel development, the growing interest among the Baltic Germans towards the culture of the peasantry as an object of 'scientific' investigation again had the effect of illuminating the intrinsic value of the language.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the main course of upward mobility for those Latvians with intellectual aspirations had remained that of assimilation into the ruling class: 'from Latvian-speaking peasants to German-speaking literati'. By the second half of the 1850s however, the growing Latvian intelligentsia had begun to preside over the 'national awakening', since the idea of Latvian nationality on both a personal and group basis had become acceptable in a way in which it previously had not (1981:217-9).

In the 'National Awakenings' which took place across Eastern Europe, folk cultures were resurrected, or, if necessary, invented, in order to provide a foundation for a national consciousness and identity. By combining elements of the folk or low culture with high art forms, a supposedly characteristic and unifying national high culture, literary as well as musical, could be established. In turn, this could be used to further claims to political independence, on the basis that an internationally recognised cultural identity justified a political one.

Half a century before Hroch (1985) was to publish his model, Vaughan Williams justified its essential second

stage through citing the example of Czechoslovakia. Here could be found 'clear proof that a self-conscious movement among a few patriots can spread so as to be a living force in the country'. Indeed, if the roots were well planted, as had been the case in both Russia and Bohemia, a tradition could be 'brought to fruition in a hundred years'. Vaughan Williams pre-empted the charge of 'artificiality' by pointing out that doctors as well as nationalists use 'unnatural' methods of revival; and '[i]f a healthy life ensues why quarrel with the means employed?' (1934:99-100,109-110). In the light of recent events in Hroch's homeland, Vaughan Williams would perhaps have been prepared to acknowledge that sometimes the doctor's only viable course of action is to turn the life-support systems off.

The systematic collection of folksongs to provide a basis for all the arts was clearly an imperative in Latvia, and this was instigated by Janis Cimze (1814-1881). The first national song festival, which took place in 1873, was based on his collection. As the years passed, these song festivals were to assume ever greater importance as symbols of Latvian national identity. Meanwhile the neighbouring Estonians provided a benchmark for cultural development. In 1857 Krisjanis Barons (1835-1923) - the 'father' of Latvian poetry - commented in the newspaper *Majas Viesis* that Estonia had overtaken the Latvians in the collection of folk-songs. The clear implication was that Latvia should catch up.

The importance placed on the epic genre by Herder has

already been noted, and the realisation that it was not represented in the surviving Latvian folk tradition came as a disappointment (Vike-Freiberga, 1985:524). Faced with the same situation, the Czechs attempted to 'buttress their own identity and existence' through the provision of a forgery (Gellner, 1987:57). However the epic imperative was to some degree satisfied in the Latvian context by Andrejs Pumpurs, whose *Lacplesis* (*Bearslayer*) appeared in 1888. Pumpurs utilised a large amount of genuine material from the Latvian folk tradition to construct his poem, which raised 'a minor legendary hero to the status of all Latvian people' (Plakans, 1969:211; 1981:244).

Whilst Pumpurs' work was undoubtedly a modern creation - the use of the past to make the future - his characters rapidly took on mythical proportions. They featured, for instance, in the play *Uguns un Nakts* (*Fire and Night*, 1905) written by Janis Rainis, widely acknowledged as the greatest figure in Latvian literature. As a representation of the idealised Latvian character, the name of Bearslayer would be adopted for the first military medal issued by the independent republic of Latvia. Bearslayer also appears prominently on the Liberty Monument which was erected in Riga in 1935.

The collection and cataloguing of folk-song and lore continued through the century. Barons himself devoted thirty-five years to the supervision of this task, and the results of his work - 1,200,000 *dainas* and 29,000 melodies (Rusmanis, 1996:85) - were published in the early years of

the present century. In the time of Latvian independence between the two World Wars, and differently categorised, the collection in the Archives of Latvian folklore included 775,257 folk-songs, 300,905 fairy tales, 47,865 legends, 450,313 riddles, 244,432 sayings and proverbs, 334,196 folk beliefs, 48,442 magic formulas, and 65,478 folk remedies (Andrups and Kalve, 1953:99). To put these figures into perspective, a population of one and a half million meant that there was one folk song for every two Latvians.

In the fine arts, National Romanticism would also continue into the twentieth century. Whilst demonstrating an awareness of developments in the wider European art world, members of this school sought their inspiration in Latvian history, folklore and country life.

Composers similarly found inspiration in Latvian folk-song. Whilst the European 'awakenings' were led by such people as lawyers, writers, and pastors, whose familiarity with language enabled them to piece together epic poetry, publish grammars and standardise the literary language, composers were not far behind. In Anderson's words, 'After Dobrovsky came Smetena, Dvorak and Janacek; after Aasen, Grieg; after Kazinczy, Bela Bartok ...' (1983:72,73).

Jazeps Vitols (1863-1948) - Prokofiev and Miaskovsky's teacher at the St. Petersburg Conservatory - had been the pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, who was convinced that

> Outside of nationality, music does not exist, and, in its essence, all music which it is customary to consider universal is national after all ([*quoted in*] Holbrooke, 1925:14).

Vitols devoted much effort to the promotion of

national folk-song festivals throughout Latvia. His 850 compositions include over 300 arrangements of Latvian folk-songs. Other works also utilise folk material, such as his *Fantazija par Latviesu Tautas Dziesmam* (*Latvian Folk-Song Fantasy*, Op. 42, 1910) for violin and orchestra, and the tone-poem *Spriditis* (Op. 37, 1907) (Gravitis, 1995:3-4). Emilis Melngailis (1874-1954), the other principal founding composer of Latvian national music (*The Baltic Observer*, June, 1993), concentrated to an even greater degree on the arrangement of folk-songs for choral performance (Rutkis, 1967:541), having himself been the collector of over 4,500 Latvian melodies (Rusmanis, 1996:85).

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The Folk-Song Society

> *The music is the people; on hearing real, national music of the purest style, we can nearly divine the character of their history; and on learning their history and national features we can guess the character of their music* (Györy, 1902:1).

> *There is a certain type of musician who seems to think that the greatest musical art occupies its position by transcending nationalism. I believe the exact reverse to be the case* (Boughton, 01.07.1910:428).

As Paul Harrington notes,

> In retrospect it must seem ludicrous that the major economic and imperial power of the world at that time should have had a folk song revival along the lines of colonial backwaters like Czechoslovakia and Hungary (1989:113).

Yet have one it did, although later than any other European country except perhaps Hungary (Pirie, 1979:48), and it is against this background that we must view the institution of the Folk-Song Society.

Somewhat ironically, in order to combat the perceived dominance of Germany in musical matters, a German model of national musical regeneration was to be followed. To this end, as Rule 2 stipulated,

> The Society shall have for its primary object the collection and preservation of Folk-Songs, Ballads, and Tunes, and the publication of such of these as may be deemed advisable (*Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 1899:I:1:iv).

Elsner and Cardinal suggest that all collecting embraces the themes of 'desire and nostalgia, saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time' (1994:1), and these criteria fully satisfy the purely antiquarian agenda. Yet on another level collection demonstrates the conscious

preservation from extinction of material which may be used in the creation of a new and better world. This might be called 'collection as salvation' (1994:1), and folk-song's elevation to this category is directly attributable to its becoming increasingly valued, however metaphorically, as the embodiment of the national spirit.

The importance of this project to the musical establishment is reflected in those appointed as Vice-Presidents: Sir John Stainer, Professor of Music at Oxford University; C. Villiers Stanford, Professor of Music at Cambridge University; Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music; and Sir C. Hubert Parry, Director of the Royal College of Music.

Parry, Mackenzie and Stanford were forerunners in the English Musical Renaissance, and enthusiastic in pursuing the relationship between national and folk-music. Indeed, Stanford had argued their essential connection as early as 1889 (Stradling and Hughes, 1993:26-32).

Although his style was 'wholly Germanic' (Banfield, 1985:42), Parry was still to be described by Elgar in 1905 as 'the head of our art in this country' (Young, 1968:49). He delivered the inaugural address at the first meeting of the Folk-Song Society on 2nd. February 1899, where his remarks, according to the *Musical Times*, 'were of that essentially *brainy* nature so characteristic of his utterances' (01.03.1899:168).

Parry spoke of the "wholesome and seasonable enterprise" that the Society was engaged in. In his view,

it would encourage fellow-feeling, since there was nothing "common or unclean" in folk-music. Similarly, there was "no sham, no got-up glitter, and no vulgarity". Indeed, this "fact" seemed to him worthy of consideration by some future philosopher. He believed folk-music to be "the outpouring of endless combined souls, who sift and try till they have found the thing that suits their native taste". The immediate problem was that "the sensitive brain fibres" of those who learnt them had "little idea of their value". Consequently, folk-song was even being driven out of the country districts where it lingered by the "repulsive" and "insidious" popular songs of the day, which reflected the "sham" and "false ideals" promoted by commercialism. As one of the "purest products of the human mind", it was imperative that folk-song should be saved.

Parry acknowledged that a determined effort in collecting folk-music had only recently become a priority in England. Other countries had been "far more keen about the matter", and even Russia had "a very fine collection" for over a century. Although it was not easily conducted, "several" members of the Society already had experience of the art, and he hoped that much "precious" folk-music would be saved.

Although the tunes still awaited discovery, Parry, like Webb before him, had already convinced himself of their character. He was consequently able to assure his audience that

> ... they are characteristic of the race - of the quiet reticence of our country folk, courageous

> and content, ready to meet what chance shall bring with a cheery heart. All the things that mark the folk-music of the race, also betoken the qualities of the race, and as a faithful reflection of ourselves, we needs must cherish it.

Parry reminded his listeners that the great composers of other countries had concentrated on their folk-music, "since style is ultimately national". Indeed, the folk-music heritage might well provide "the ultimate solution of the problem of characteristic national art" (*Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 1899:I:1:1-4).

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> *... the collecting of folk-songs seems to have been a new passion that attacked musicians suddenly and simultaneously all over the country* (Pakenham, 1957:23).
>
> *it is mainly in the ranks of the most highly cultured musicians ... that we meet with the keenest interest in this 'back to the land' movement* (Grainger, 1915:416).

At about this time, certain 'distinguished foreign musicians', including both Grieg and Dvorak, were invited to become honorary members (Keel, 1948:113); presumably on the basis that they provided appropriate models for English composers to follow. Of Greig, whose 'mission' had been to 'proclaim a Norwegian nationality in music', Fuller Maitland would later write that

> ... it is curious to notice how entirely he assimilated the musical idioms of the country, repeating them with the guileless reiteration of a bird, even in music that was not intended to reflect the national characteristics (1907:141).

The *Annual Report* of the *Folk Song Society* (June 1907:3) noted that several British composers had recently used their national folk tunes, as themes for orchestral

and choral works, 'with great success'. Amongst those cited were Vaughan Williams' *Norfolk Rhapsody*, a choral work by Rutland Boughton, and von Holst's fantasia on *Songs of the West*. Shortly before his death, Greig wrote in a similarly encouraging vein to Percy Grainger:

> ... I have again immersed myself in your folk-song settings, and I see more and more how full of genius they are. In them you have thrown a clear light upon how the English folk-song ... is worthy of the privilege of being lifted up into the *niveau* of art, thereby to create an independent English music. The folk-songs will doubtless be able to form the basis of a national style, as they have in other lands, those of the greatest musical culture not excepted (1907:142-3).

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Other solutions

> *One may claim to have a sincere admiration for many of these tunes and to tolerate the words because of the music ... But surely, in view of the present development of the art, the prospect of our future composers finding inspiration from this source is unlikely* (*Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:806).

Redolent with irony, this quotation serves to emphasise that whilst the creation of a national music was seen as an imperative, not all those concerned were convinced of the necessity to follow the folk-song path to national musical regeneration.

Whilst 'awakening' European nations had no other option than their recourse to the folk tradition, a significant difference in the English context was that England already had a musical past which could be exploited. Recognition of this past had led to the introduction of the concept of a 'renaissance' of English

music, implying a revival of 'the musical prestige which England once enjoyed' (Vaughan Williams, 1902:8). Moreover, since the zenith of English musical achievement had been before the German rise to musical prominence, it was necessarily guaranteed to have been free of German influence.

Although it was accepted that this tradition had been dormant, it needed only to be reawakened, and recast as continuity. There existed, for instance, a strong feeling that church music, 'from Thomas Tallys down to Goss and Wesley', showed an unmistakably English character, 'paralleled by nothing in the music of other countries' (T.H. Yorke Trotter, 1905:32,33). By such means a long musical history, characterised by Holst as 'the alternation of light and darkness' (1959:56), was allowed to become part of a new definition of English culture. In outlining a continuous choral tradition linking Tallis to Parry, Vaughan Williams stretched this metaphor to claim that 'If the light of English music flickered, it never quite went out' (Vaughan Williams, 1963:168).

In order that this heritage could be built on, historians, antiquarians and music collectors had undertaken a major reassessment of the musical past, which was partially reflected in the publication of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. The Renaissance had been gathering impetus and self-respect throughout the 1880s and 1890s, and reached maturity around 1900 (Banfield, 1985:1) - a time at which the folk-song movement had scarcely

begun. Even then, Vaughan Williams had misgivings about the wisdom of following this apparently mechanistic 'panacea':

> Now, English composers do not spring from the peasantry. Indeed, in England there are no true peasantry for them to spring from. Why, then, should an English composer attempt to found his style on the music of a class to which he does not belong, and which itself no longer exists? (1902:8).

Although he later became an enthusiastic advocate of the folk-song movement and sat on the committee of the Folk-Song Society, Vaughan Williams' mature style would also incorporate elements of other archaic English genres which antedated the perceived German hegemony. In addition, his early conviction that 'trying to be English' was no less reprehensible than 'trying to be foreign' (1902:8) helped Vaughan Williams to decide to study with Ravel; who, together with Debussy, represented the 'new wind from France' which blew through British music in the closing years of this century's opening decade (Foreman, 1995[b]:5).

This trend was quickly seized upon by Cecil Forsyth, for whom the most fundamental lesson of musical history was the appreciation that 'no great composer has ever emerged into world-speech except through the perfect utterance of his own dialect' (1911:105). He complained,

> We have, unfortunately, always had the imitator with us, and he has produced for us endless imitations of Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Wagner, and Tschaikowsky. Now he is beginning to turn his attention to Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy; but, however clever his imitations may be - and they are often diabolically clever - there is in them all a seed of death. It is dishonest music; or worse, it is traitorous (1911:119).

Despite holding membership for the first decade of the Society's existence, Edward Elgar, the key figure in English music of that era, is reputed to have adopted a position which effectively took no account of the folk-song movement. On one occasion, when asked what he thought of the revived interest in folk-music, he is said to have replied that "I am folk-music" ([*quoted in*] Trend, 1985:31).

Young suggests that Elgar's origins precluded a romantic view of the 'folk' (1968:xvii): he could not, for instance, have written so glibly - as Vaughan Williams did - of seeking songs in the parlour of a country inn

> in the rare company of minds imbued with that fine sense which comes from advancing years and a life-long communion with nature ... (1906:141).

Instead, in his lecture *A Future for English Music*, Elgar advised young composers to draw inspiration from "their own country, from their own literature, and ... from their own climate", since "[o]nly by drawing from any real English inspiration shall we ever arrive at having an English art" (at Birmingham, 16.3.1905, [*quoted in*] Young, 1968:xvii,51). In common with everyone else concerned, however, he hoped that

> we may once again be a musical land and produce a 'school' (not an egotism of several) of serious English music which shall have a hold on the affections of the people, and SHALL be held in respect abroad ([lecture 13.12.1905, [*quoted in*] Young, 1968:223-5)

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> *... a remarkably individual and varied repertoire was created by a wide range of composers who established personal idioms now recognised world-wide as English* (Foreman, 1995[a]:96).

Conjecture is invariably, and probably necessarily, at the heart of attempts to closely define the source of a given composer's inspiration: Rubbra, for instance, was "surprised" to learn that critics found an Elizabethan influence in his work ([*quoted in*] Schafer, 1963:68). The setting of English verse as art song occupied composers across the spectrum. As a recognised great literary language, English verse combined with English tune provided an opportunity to accentuate national qualities, Elizabethan works in particular endowing the composition with all kinds of cultural overtones. Celtic mysticism provided another, perhaps tangential, inspiration - particularly for Rutland Boughton - whilst Samuel Coleridge-Taylor sought his own roots in works based on African tunes.

Not altogether accurately, perhaps, Pirie cites Delius, Bax, Ireland, Bridge and Walton as other contemporary composers who were 'unaffected by the cult' of folk-song (1979:164). Although the *Musical Times* (01.08.1924:689) included him in a list of composers in whose works the folk-song influence was 'more or less prominent', Stanford's pupil John Ireland claimed that the use of folk-song was "a thing I've never gone in for at all", mainly because his teachers never discussed it ([*quoted in*] Schafer, 1963:31-2). Instead he ascribed the "essentially English" quality of his music to the

rediscovery of Tudor church music at the turn of the century ([*quoted in*] Trend, 1985:134-5), which he felt to have had the greatest influence on all the composers of his generation (Schafer, 1963:31-2). Herbert Howells (1892-1983), another of Stanford's pupils, would in later years endorse Ireland's contention by recalling how "all through my life I've had this strange feeling that I belonged somehow to the Tudor period" ([*quoted in*] Achenbach, 1996:3). Yet folk-song was, as 'something entirely new to us and yet not new', undoubtedly 'in the air' (Vaughan Williams, 1934:75,82).

The conscious decision not to follow the cult would nevertheless remain an effect of it, as also would the influence of music composed by its adherents. By the mid-1930s it would be clear to Vaughan Williams - and anyone else possessed of what he felt to be the required level of 'imagination' - that the younger generation of composers, albeit unconsciously, had absorbed the folk idiom to the extent that 'they speak the language without thinking' (1934:83-4). Famously, in Gilbert Murray's words, both the child of tradition yet a rebel against it, Vaughan Williams had of course by the 1930s himself become part of that tradition against which younger composers now rebelled.

Although the national art was to be based not just on folk-song, but many English influences, the folk-song spirit was both congruous and pervasive in an era characterised by 'the sturdy provincialism of the folk-dance' (Lambert, 1934:176-7).

Kidson and the Folk-Song Society

In contrast to the general trend, Kidson's interests appear to have moved away from the oral tradition through the 1890s. As Ethel Kidson would later comment - albeit in relation to another matter - 'It was characteristic of uncle he was always a little ahead of current thought and never behind it' ([?]1926:92-3). It is therefore interesting to speculate whether he would have expended much further energy in this direction if the wider musical world had not become more interested in the field which he had helped to pioneer.

We might return to his letter of 9th. January 1898 to Lucy Broadwood, where we learn that he 'should be glad to belong to the Society if the subscription is not excessive'. Kidson's characteristic modesty is evident in this comment; although one of the few acknowledged experts, he would not presume to expect a guaranteed position at the centre of the Society.

Yet does his mention of the managing committee, and their necessary 'earnestness', indicate a desire to be on it? After all, he assumed Broadwood to be there, and her 'absolute knowledge' did not exceed his own. Perhaps he felt his knowledge imposed some responsibility on him to help guide the Society. At the same time, mention of the cost of membership suggests a sense of indifference - he could await developments, without in any way having committed himself to participation.

An undated letter from Fuller Maitland to his cousin

Lucy Broadwood suggests that the Society was not brought into existence without problems having first to be overcome. He evidently disagreed with Kidson's objection to being affiliated to the Folk-Lore Society; but together with Kidson and Broadwood formed a faction hostile to the objectives of what he called 'the 'faking' party'. Meanwhile, Kate Lee caused offence to A.P. Graves - who had suggested founding the Society in the first place - by putting herself down as Honorary Secretary.

Kidson was arguably the most knowledgeable of the founder members, and on this basis was elected to the Executive Committee where he, Broadwood and Fuller Maitland would, according to Nettel, do the bulk of the 'actual work' (1954:240). Of the fourteen members of this Committee, only three others, Lucy Broadwood, Alice Gomme and Kate Lee, had any experience as collectors, and even then it was limited in comparison to Kidson's (Boyes, 1993:58 [*footnote* 6]).

Kate Lee, for instance, admitted that she - for want of any other guideline - had determined which songs to take down according to whether the title had "a modern sound". So on this basis a traditional song, *The Wreck of the Princess Royal*, had been rejected. Yet she had taken down what she considered a "fairly good" tune, only to be told by Kidson that it was not traditional (1899:9).

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The test of 'authenticity'

> *Ask him for the origin of some particular tune, and he would trace it back through this volume and that till he got to the rock bottom* ('L.' [J.T. Lightwood], 1927:205:7).
>
> *I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Sign of Four* [1890]: Conan Doyle, 1929:145).

Kidson contributed editorial annotations to the early journals, and acted as a member of the small Committee of Selection. All the songs collected were sent to Kidson for first examination, since the Society was concerned to publish only traditional songs that had not previously appeared in print, but been handed down orally. The Annual Report for 1904 noted that

> Mr. Frank Kidson generously puts his valuable library of old song-books, and his wide knowledge, at the disposal of the Society; and to him, in the first instance contributions are sent in order that the history of the songs may be traced, and printed matter be sifted from the purely traditional as thoroughly as possible ([*quoted in*] Keel, 1948:116).

Evidently there was 'often disagreement' when Kidson discarded a song because he found it, or its ancestor, in print as far back as the sixteenth century: the limitations of his library prevented him from checking back further (Keel, 1948:116 [*footnote* 13]).

An interesting example of Kidson's gatekeeping is to be found in Broadwood's MSS at Cecil Sharp House. Vaughan Williams had collected, from a Mr. Carruthers at Carlisle on August 9th., 1906, a song entitled *Geordie Gill* which he submitted for consideration.

Kidson replied:

Geordie Gill

To Mr. R.V. Williams & editors

The verse of Geordie Gill is by Anderson. A version of this tune is printed in 'Songs of Northern England' (Reay & Stokoe) with Anderson's words. It is the well-known Scottish tune 'Andro & his Cutty Gun' ... Kindly decide whether to include your version or not.

He further noted that the song had been written on 10th. February 1804, and published in Anderson's own *Cumberland Ballads.*

Kidson's note has been annotated 'Leave out' by Broadwood, Sharp and Fuller Maitland. Vaughan Williams put his initials to a terse 'all right'.

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> *The nation that has a poetry and a music of its own can never be either absorbed or overshadowed by any other nation* (*The Labour Leader*, 02.02.1912:70 [*quoted in* Gammon, 1980:77]).

This chapter has placed Kidson's activities in their wider extra-national context. There is no single 'modern' project, but rather a plurality, each with its own specific national characteristics and significance (Lash, 1990:201) - and England, as we have seen, came late to this particular element of it. The 'pioneering' aspect of Kidson's apparently singular activities was confined to the specifically national sphere.

We have examined the notion of national music and its eventual implementation in England - a process which culminated in the institution of the Folk-Song Society. Elements of Kidson's antiquarian project had been adopted, by others, in pursuit of a political one - a project decidedly independent of his. But Kidson's recruitment to

the Society was necessitated by the fact that he was one of the very few individuals in any position to authenticate the material whose 'rescue' was now seen as crucial to the musical future of the nation.

Uncoordinated guerilla units of intellectuals advance the project of modernity (Bauman, 1991;1994). Whilst misgivings about the folk-song path to musical regeneration have already been noted, a different approach - but one which nevertheless incorporates a folk-song element - receives consideration in the next chapter.

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Chapter 6: MUSICAL COMPETITION FESTIVALS AND THE FOLK-SONG COMPETITION

Legislative action is multi-directional. This chapter considers the Competitive Music movement, which aimed at the achievement of musical proficiency through the promotion of international standards. The nation would be strengthened by mass instruction in supra-national art.

Almost incidentally to this project, the gathering together of rural dwellers in large numbers provided a unique opportunity for folk-song collectors - there was no need to seek out the 'folk', who would instead come to them. Once again, the authority derived from Kidson's pioneer status determined his participation.

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The final years of the nineteenth century saw many parallel influences at work in the cause of national musical regeneration. Frequently these converged - indeed, it was often the same people who were involved in the different aspects of it. The union of the folk-song and competitive music movements provides an example in the form of the folk-song competition.

Despite precedents (*see, for instance* H.C., 1935:1), the competitive music festival movement was essentially the brainchild of Augusta Mary Wakefield (1853-1910), and had its modest beginnings in 1885, when three double vocal quartets sang - 'as badly as may be' - R.J.S. Stevens' *Ye Spotted Snakes* on the tennis court of her father's mansion at Sedgwick near Kendal (Wakefield, 1907:4). As Mrs.

Mansell would explain at the Mid-Somerset Festival in 1904, the "special object" in starting the competitions had been "to bring really good classical music within the reach of every English home", and "to get something like national music in England" (*Somerset Standard*, 18.03.1904).

Augusta Mary Wakefield (1853-1910) came from an old Westmorland Quaker family: the bank which bore their name from 1788 to 1893 had provided their fortune (Newmarch, 1912:10-11). In the late 1870s Mary was allowed to study music in London, participating 'fully' in musical life there (1912:29-30; Fuller Maitland, 1910:V:421; Wood, 1938:33). Amongst her friends at this time she numbered Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Charles Stanford, Dr. Arthur Somervell, and 'nearly all those leaders of society who stood for music and philanthropy' (Newmarch, 1912:41-3). It was also at this time that she first met Lucy Broadwood's cousin J.A. Fuller Maitland and Mrs. Rosa Newmarch, the prolific writer on Eastern European national music [*see Chapter 5*], who would become Wakefield's great friend and posthumous biographer (1912:23,30,33).

Wakefield began to give concert tours all over England. She sang in Rome in 1878, where she undertook further study (1912:31,35; Fuller Maitland, 1910:V:421). Her 1879-80 season was 'triumphant' (Newmarch, 1912:43), and to be engaged for the 1880 Gloucester Festival represented 'the crowning recognition of her artistic powers'. Yet this very success emphasised 'the difficulties which beset a woman in her position' (1912:41), as 'the

problem of fees and other delicate questions' confronted her (1905:90). The question at issue was

> whether a woman is justified in earning money she does not actually need; and how far she may, for her own delight, give her services without payment, at the risk of depriving some poorer sister of her daily bread (Newmarch, 1912:41).

A decision had to be made, and opportunities of singing at the Chester, Norwich and Leeds festivals were declined 'at her parents' wish' (1912:41). She nevertheless became one of the earliest supporters of the Women's Suffrage movement, and

> ... was in all things on the side of progress and had few misgivings as to the possibility of making the world move on too fast (Newmarch, 1912:111).

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Wakefield firmly believed that

> ... if music as a serious art is ever to be appreciated and understood here, as it is in Germany, the formation of an educated, enlightened public is the first requisite; and in order to produce this valuable result, most surely will the root of the matter prove to be the cultivation and encouragement of the musical amateur (01.03.1884:144).

Instruction, she contended, was necessarily at the root of 'healthy national development' in any direction. Music Competitions provided 'some of the most easy and feasible means of instruction' in pursuit of the cultivation of music, the enlargement and improvement of audiences, and the diffusion of taste. The future of English music was assured if Competition formed its foundations (1888:3).

Her eventual aim was to see Village Competitions 'as

plentiful as local Agricultural Shows': the consequent improvement in the general musical standard of the rural population would be 'something enormous' (Wakefield, 1888:4-5,8-9).

Competition would 'create and foster' a 'national love of music' amongst 'the masses of people who really represent the people of England', providing 'the best means of popular musical education attainable under existing conditions' (Wakefield, 1904:2-3;1907:14). Moreover, as 'a democratic musical movement', the Festivals formed a social platform on which 'everyone, irrespective of religion, politics, class, or education, can meet freely with a common cause, and a common ideal and interest' (1904:1,5).

This ideal of creating 'the love and, in consequence, the demand for the greatest music, by the greatest number' (1904:1-2;1907:14) was believed by Newmarch to be 'socialistic in the highest sense of the word' (1905:90-1). As Wakefield herself wrote,

> In order to arrive at national musical enthusiasm, you do not only want the cultivated few; you want educated masses of people, in every district, to form a musical centre, and to be the nucleus of a great widely-spread audience, with hearing ears and understanding minds.

Were this the case even in London, she believed, there would certainly be one permanent orchestra - Berlin, by contrast, already had three - and a permanent opera, 'because these music-loving masses would insist on having them' (Wakefield, 1907:1-2).

The Festival Movement 'spread like a flowing tide throughout the whole country' (Newmarch, 1912:80),

attracting the enthusiastic support of many prominent figures. To Ernest Newman, for instance, Musical Competition Festivals represented 'the most hopeful sign in English musical life today' ([*quoted in*] Wakefield, 1907:4). He considered that

> There is probably no one who has been brought into close touch with the Competitive Festival movement who does not remain an ardent worker for it. The prime ground of this enthusiasm is the conviction that the movement is doing more than any other single force for the musical regeneration of England (Newman, *The Value of Competition Festivals* [*quoted in* Newmarch, 1912:102-3]).

Mary Wakefield's name appears in the list of members from the second number of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* onwards. Her article on *May Carols*, which appeared in the appropriate month's issue of *Nineteenth Century* in 1897, and for which Lucy Broadwood provided a quantity of unpublished material, is reflective of the considerable research which Wakefield had already undertaken into the oral tradition.

A 'pioneer' in the revival of interest in national melody, the folk-song movement received 'a great impulse' from her support (Newmarch, 1912:54,92). The most well-known aspect of this support is the Folk-Song Competition.

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After the establishment of the Folk-Song Society, a further effort was made to arouse interest in folk-song in districts where it might linger. Miss Wakefield and the committee of the Westmorland Musical Festival were the first to institute a 'Folk-song Competition' as part of their programme, and for several years quaint songs from the dales were rendered by the people who had learned them traditionally (Kidson, 21.02.1907).

As the first to take 'official cognisance of an undercurrent of national song fast running dry', the committee of the Westmorland Festival were to be credited with 'the happy invention of a new feature for such functions - a Folk-Song Competition', commented the *Musical Times* (01.04.1903:234).

The 'entirely new competition' of 'Folk Song, unaccompanied' had first been featured at the 1902 Festival (*Westmorland Gazette*, 12.04.1902). The Subject of this Class was given in the Festival Programme as 'The best unpublished Country Dialect Song, which has been handed down traditionally and orally in any one of the Six Northern Counties'. Although the song had to be sung by the Competitor, the prize would be awarded not so much for the best singing of the song, as for 'the most interesting and curious of the old-fashioned songs now so seldom heard' (1903:16).

A copy of the words had to be submitted in advance to the Executive Committee for approval, with full particulars as to the origin of the song (*Westmorland Gazette*, 12.04.1902). Although this information would doubtless have been passed on, the judge would nevertheless have remained in ignorance of the tune to which the words were set until

the song was heard in competition.

Dr. J.C. Bridge, the general adjudicator, refrained from comment after the songs had been heard at this first ever Folk-Song contest, because they had "a far greater authority on folk-songs in the shape of Mr. Frank Kidson", who had "kindly come to help in that competition". Bridge "could only say Mr. Kidson was a walking encyclopoedia on these things".

Kidson replied by congratulating the Festival committee on their originality in instituting such a competition, intended as it was to first awakening an interest in, and secondly "rescuing" as many unpublished specimens of old local songs as they could. Some of these "old ditties" were disappearing so fast that they remained in the memory of only one person, and, as had already happened to so many others, would be entirely lost when that person died.

Kidson gave a short exposition of his views on the value of folk-song. This is important to us because we gain an understanding of his orientation towards such material in the early years of the Folk-Song Society.

It must straight away be said that this had necessarily changed in the decade since the publication of *Traditional Tunes*. The pastime of a handful of antiquarians had been transformed into a discourse of national importance in which the foremost figures of English music now participated. Whilst Kidson may perhaps have been bemused by certain aspects of this discourse, he was

neither isolated from it nor immune to its influence. Indeed, elements of it may be discerned in his comments.

But one thing had not changed. Apart from any musical or antiquarian value, he believed, there was at least one reason why people should treasure folk songs. They had been the "solace" of generations before them, and "in general" had been passed down by "some kindly disposed soul" whose life had been "brightened" by them. The songs people remembered

> might have been the favourite of their father, their grandfather, or more likely their mother, and ... no one was ever the worse off for memories of her or for the kindly folk passing or passed away.

This, for Kidson, had always been their principal attraction; and would, I believe, remain so.

Musically they were also of value. Melody - another of Kidson's hobby-horses; his lecture on the *Vitality of Melody* will be reviewed in *Chapter 10* - was not exclusive to the trained musician, but "a God-sent gift of which the possessor might well be proud, and the toilers at the plough and spinners by the fire had all contributed to the world's store of it". Germany had long since admitted her peasant's songs into her national music, and Kidson would not deny that nation musically held its head very high. But he won the acclaim of the audience for commenting that he for one "would not grant that her folk songs were any better than ours".

The class of songs called 'folk-songs' were different from other 'national' lyrics in that they were songs which

belonged to no known composer. Most of them "had sprung to the lips of some person almost unconsciously". Then, by being passed on entirely by ear, they had been modified, and perhaps improved, as they had gradually taken their current form. The folk-song might be said to be "an evolution".

The words which were generally used to them were necessarily more fixed than the melodies. They were almost always printed on the ballad sheets which were sold on market days or at fair times, or hawked about by pedlars and professional ballad singers. Lack of time prevented Kidson from telling the audience "many curious facts regarding these matters".

He explained that judging would be carried out strictly according to the following criteria: the song must be old enough to have been sung in the northern counties for at least two generations; and it must have been an old tune which had not up to the present been published. The most interesting song fulfilling these conditions would take the first prize, more especially if the words as well as the tune had not been published in any book, though they might be found on some early ballad sheet. Consequently they might have to ignore a better song sung by a better singer.

Whether Kidson had himself devised these rules I have been unable to discover. However it would seem reasonable to suppose that he must have played at least some part in their compilation, particularly in view of the stipulation

for an unpublished tune.

The reviewer for the *Musical Times* recognised that the 'difficulty' facing the judge in such a situation was to ascertain whether any given song had 'escaped the net of the publishers who issued the innumerable song books of a hundred years ago and more'. On this occasion, the margin for error had been 'reduced to a minimum by the help of Mr. Frank Kidson of Leeds, who, in the matter of old songs, is a complete 'Enquire Within''.

Despite it being the 'first attempt', this 'experiment' of holding a folk-song competition had proved 'wonderfully successful'. Although the supply of old unpublished songs was not inexhaustible, the reviewer thought that there must still be sufficient in existence to provide for many more such competitions. The idea, like many more that had originated at the Kendal Festival, was 'well worthy of imitation' (01.05.1902:330).

Kidson's comments on the songs he heard in competition were reported by the press. These give a clear indication of the approach he adopted in relation to this particular task; and, by extension, to song collection in general.

From ten entries, Kidson was able to pick three where, to his knowledge, neither words nor melody had appeared in print. The winner, "charmingly" sung by Miss Hayhurst, was *Sledburn Fair*. Kidson thought it was "of great merit, being the class of song they had wanted", and "very pretty indeed". The song would subsequently appear in *English Peasant Songs* (1929), Ethel Kidson's last selection taken

from her uncle's collection.

Second came Miss Germain's *Holm-Bank Hunting Song*. It was "particularly good", and, being a chronicle of local persons and scenes, of great interest to the district. Although it had not been sung very strongly, Kidson believed that "if a good rollicking huntsman got hold of the song he would make them know about it". Mr. C.J. Cropper's *A Hunting Song* was placed third. It was a good tune, but ranked in this position because it was not local.

The rest of the entries were disqualified on account of prior publication. Of Mr. Henderson of Carlisle's offering of *Bleckell Murry Neet*, Kidson thought the tune "very old and beautiful". But the words, written by Robert Anderson, had been published. Anderson had also written Mr. Turnbull's *Canny Auld Cummerlan*, and the tune was "not very good". *There was an Auld Man*, sung by Colonel Mason of Kirkby Stephen, had appeared in the *Orpheus Caledonius* in 1725.

Kidson believed that the words of *The Yorkshire Bite*, sung by Mr. Hayhurst of Milnthorpe, were by John Emery, the Yorkshire actor. They had been intended to be sung to the tune called *Derry Down*, and had been so published about 1820.

Both tune and words of *The Helvellyn Shepherd's Song*, sung by Canon Rawnsley of Keswick, were the work of Charles Dibdin, who wrote *Tom Bowling* and other sea songs. The song was first sung by Dibdin himself at a little entertainment called *Professional Volunteers* in 1808. In Kidson's opinion

the tune, as sung by Rawnsley, was practically the same as Dibdin had written, and provided proof that melodies "hung together very well indeed".

In proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Kidson, Miss Wakefield said that they were "greatly indebted to him for coming in that very liberal way and giving them the benefit of his unparalleled knowledge" (*Westmorland Gazette*, 12.04.1902; *Musical Times*, 01.05.1902).

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The 'interesting Folk-Song competition, peculiar to this Festival', was held again the following year. The first competition had resulted in 'the bringing forth of many an interesting old song hoarded purely in memory in the Dales', and the Committee wished to continue the work of 'rescu[ing] the country songs so fast dying out'. Frank Kidson, 'a well-known authority on such matters', was to continue as judge (*Musical Times*, 01.04.1903:234,243).

There were nine entries, but only six competed, and one of the songs sung had been previously published.

The first prize went to Mr. Barber of Cartmel, whose *Poor Old Horse* was "a fine genuine folk-song". Kidson had previously noted down a tune from a Lancashire singer very like the one sung that day, but this particular example had not been published. The words were to be found on ballad sheets.

Miss Bownass's first song, *Swarth Fell Rocks*, had "a very pretty air, very old and very beautiful". Although the words did not fit it well, Kidson considered that song to

deserve the second prize.

The Cartmel Hunting Song was another instance of a lady - Mrs. Campbell of Cartmel - bravely tackling a hunting song. Kidson thought it "rather unfortunate" that some of the "sturdy young farmers" could not have "rattled [them] out" instead. The air of the song was "very pretty indeed", but it had a close resemblance to *The Holm Bank Hunting Song* sung at the previous year's competition. This was awarded third prize.

Mr. Willie Hayhurst of Milnthorpe contributed two songs, neither of which found favour with Kidson. *The Ploughing Match* had a certain amount of local interest, but it was not very old, and the tune was neither particularly good nor striking. *Farewell to Longsleddale*, meanwhile, was a "rather curious" song. The air was "not a very good one", and he could "scarcely" award it a prize.

Tarry Won[1], Miss Bownass of Windermere's second song, was "very good" and "very old". But both words and air had already been published, although Kidson "did not suppose the words which had been sung that day had been got from any printed book". The words had been published in Allan Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany* in about 1735, whilst the air that Miss Bownass sang was a corruption of the original one, published in Scotland by William McGibbon about 1743 or 1744.

Of those not sung, Kidson understood *Ground for the*

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[1] Evidently, as Vic Gammon suggests, a misprint of *Tarry Woo'* [*wool*].

Floor and *It's Nobbut Me* to be good old songs with good tunes. *Axes to Grind*, on the other hand, was a published song, and "therefore it did not matter" (*Westmorland Gazette*, 25.04.1903).

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There were six entrants for the folk-song competition in 1904; one of whom, Mr. Luke Barber of Cartmel, failed to appear due to illness. Kidson again acted as judge. Although he "expressed pleasure that the competition still held on", he would have liked to have heard a "little better" selection, since he was sure there were plenty of good songs in Kendal. The problem lay in getting "the right people to come forth and sing them" - which, by implication, clerics, military officers and various other affluent friends of Miss Wakefield were clearly not.

The Old Dun Cow, sung by the Reverend T. Heelis, of Crosthwaite, was in Kidson's estimation "a capital song". The words were "very good", and, although it had a "smattering" of *The Wearing of the Green* about it, the tune was good as well. This song was awarded the first prize.

Mr. J. Collinson, also of Crosthwaite, sang three songs. *I Wonder What Has Kept My Love* was an old unpublished song as far as Kidson knew, but he could not give it a high position as the tune was "not very striking". Although "undoubtedly old", both the words and music of *Billie Taylor* had been published many times, and an opera founded on it some ten or fifteen years previously. It had sung to the same tune as Mr. Collinson's

at the Adelphi Theatre, possibly 50 years before. *In Yon Land* was "rather good", and to that he awarded second prize.

The Old Maid's Hospital, sung by Mr. Wolfenden of Kirkby Lonsdale, was an old song. Kidson had seen it in print under the date of 1828. It became very popular in the next few years, and there were many versions of it. The tune to which it had been sung was very much the same as the published version.

Kidson thought *The Hills of Bowness*, sung by Miss Cookson of Heversham, to be a good local song, evidently written by some local enthusiast. But the tune was a published one, being that sung to *The Meeting of the Waters*, which appeared in Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

It's Nobbut Me was sung by Mr. Braithwaite of Kirby Stephen, who had failed to turn up the previous year. Although the words were "rather good", the tune was "unfortunately not very striking". Kidson wondered whether Mr. Braithwaite had got a "quite correct" version of the tune, for "certainly as he sang it, it was not very good".

The Golden Glove, which was to have been sung by the absent Mr. Barber, was a "good old one". Versions of it had been published, but it seemed quite possible to Kidson that the one that was to have been sung could have been an unpublished version of the tune.

"Of course", Kidson was reported as saying, the "main thing" they had to look at in these old folk songs was the melody. "The words generally were not very good, but some

of the melodies of the real old folk songs were very nice" (*Westmorland Gazette*, 16.04.1904).

Delivered in such an offhand manner, Kidson's concluding thoughts encapsulate his longstanding belief that the contemporary value of the oral tradition lay principally in its function as a repository of old melodies. After all, why else should he have chosen to publish his pioneering song collection under the title of *Traditional Tunes*?

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As an illustration of the ambivalent nature of modernity, the 'folk-song' competition - a strange hybrid born of competing, but, in some respects, complementary programmes of musical regeneration - could not be bettered. On the one hand, the competition consolidates the notion - tacitly endorsed in *Traditional Tunes* - that the oral tradition of the rural 'peasant' is the natural domain of the diligent collector. On the other, the competition is incorporated in a movement whose specific aim is to promote the 'villager's' appreciation and practice of international art music - a movement which will inevitably hasten the demise of that same oral tradition.

Again, as we saw in the last chapter in relation to the Folk-Song Society, Kidson's participation in the folk-song competitions was determined by his possibly unique ability to evaluate the material which entrants contributed. At this stage of the revival - when empirical considerations were accepted as paramount - his absolute

authority in such matters went unquestioned and unchallenged.

These competitions were to play a significant role in the development of the revival, and will receive further consideration in the chapter which follows.

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Chapter 7: ENTER THE LEGISLATOR

The pioneer work has been done. In this chapter, a legislator recognises the inherent potential of the fledgling folk-song movement as an ideal vehicle for the implementation of a legislative project.

Working to a model which presupposes the existence of a 'garden' culture, Cecil Sharp - here presented as the epitome of the future-oriented activist legislator - first sets out to find examples of what he has decided English folk-song should be. His fieldwork produces a legislative programme designed for strategic application in the educational system: its object is nothing short of national regeneration.

Having fulfilled his pioneer function, Kidson - the past-oriented antiquarian pioneer - begins to be superseded in authority as Sharp prepares to assume the complementary roles of folk-song 'expert' and leader of the folk-song 'cult'.

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Cecil James Sharp

> *... he was not the first in the field, and we may add that he was not the last; the men who give their names to a movement seldom are either* (Fox Strangways, 1933:56).
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> *When the history of the English musical revival of the twentieth century comes to be written, the most famous name of the period will be, I believe, not that of a composer, performer or theorist, but that of Cecil Sharp, who rediscovered our English folk songs and dances and gave them back to those to whom they belong* ... Ralph Vaughan Williams ([*quoted in*] *Music and Letters*, 1925:289).

In his biography of Vaughan Williams, Michael Kennedy suggested that whilst the founding of the Folk Song Society had been an 'official' acknowledgement of the new interest in folk-song, the Society's affairs had at first been of a rather 'dilettante' nature. But then, with the 'advent' of Cecil Sharp, '[t]he whole movement blazed into life' (1964:24).

When Kennedy's book was written, Sharp's legendary status had become such that it was impossible to envisage a time when he had not been in some way involved in folk-song. Hyatt King, for instance, writes of Sharp's 'lifelong devotion [*my emphasis*] to folk-song' (1963:85); whilst Keel, looking back from 1948, evidently took for granted that

> the most momentous election (on May 23rd, 1901) to membership of the Society, was that of Cecil Sharp who had, until that time, pursued his work of collecting folk songs and folk dances independently (1948:114) [*again my emphasis*].

Sharp was only four years younger than Kidson. Yet, despite Keel's assertion, Sharp did not begin collecting folk-song in the field until 1903; that is, two years after

becoming a member of the Society, and at least twenty years after Kidson's first attempts at recording the oral tradition. Sharp joined the Committee of the Folk-Song Society in 1904.

There is some evidence to suggest that Sharp actively participated in his own lionisation, through retrospectively 'tailoring' his life story to 'project the image he desired' (Anderson, 1994:618). The standard biography of Cecil Sharp - 'a model of level-headed tribute and assessment' (*Musical Times*, 1948:174) - is that produced by A.H. Fox Strangways at the request of, and in collaboration with, Maud Karpeles, in 1933 (Howes, 1969[b]:11; Karpeles, 1948:234), and subsequently revised by Karpeles in 1967.

One of eleven children, Sharp was born in London in 1859 into comfortable circumstances. His father was a slate merchant. Sharp spent five years at Uppingham school, followed by three more at a 'coaching establishment' in Weston-super-Mare. He then read mathematics at Clare College, Cambridge, and passed the first examination for the Bachelor of Music degree.

On leaving Cambridge in 1882, his father suggested that Cecil should 'seek his own fortune' in Australia (Fox Strangways, 1933:1-8), where he would eventually become Associate to the Chief Justice of South Australia. Apart from two visits to England (in 1885-6 and 1891), Sharp was to remain there for the next ten years.

Having made a study of Sharp's time in Australia,

Anderson concedes that many 'mysteries' remain. He also suggests that Fox Strangways' account of this period of Sharp's life is so 'inaccurate, highly selective in its facts and subtly misrepresentative', as to cast doubt on the accuracy and balance of the rest. Moreover, in making 'careful efforts to control the substance of the biographies', Karpeles was as concerned to perpetuate the legend as Sharp himself had been (1994:617-8,626).

Harker similarly notes that Karpeles' revised editions (1955, 1967) of Fox Strangways' *Cecil Sharp* (1933) 'omit important information', whilst her revisions of Sharp's *English Folk Song: some conclusions* (1907) 'are different books' (1982:60 [*footnote* 1]).

It is not necessary for us to dwell on the detail of Sharp's time in Australia. Even to Fox Strangways this whole decade of Sharp's life warrants only three and a half pages. Yet it is worth noting that it was connections made in Australia which enabled this 'opportunist and social climber' to get his subsequent teaching positions at Ludgrove, the preparatory school for Eton [1893-1910], and Hampstead Conservatoire [1896-1905], in addition to becoming music teacher to the Royal family [1904-7] (Anderson, 1994:625; Fox Strangways, 1933:18,24,52).

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If Herder's epiphany had occurred at Jägelsee on St. John's Eve in 1765, Sharp could well claim Boxing Day, 1899, as his. Whitsun was the correct time, but the desire to earn a little extra money had brought out the Headington

morris men. They visited the house of Sharp's mother-in-law - where, by chance, both he and his family were staying:

> Sharp watched and listened spellbound. He felt that a new world of beauty had been revealed to him ... In telling the story of the folk-music revival Sharp always spoke of this Headington incident as the turning-point of his life (Fox Strangways, 1933:27).

As with so many claimed 'discoveries', it was hardly the case that folk-dance was unknown: indeed, Neal credited 'the first definite effort made to reawaken' the morris tradition to D'Arcy Ferrers [Ferris (Chandler, 1993:122)] in the Bidford-on-Avon area as early as 1886 (1915:159).

Regular public performance by the Headington Quarry side throughout most of the century had, ironically, only been abandoned a year or two after this date. Reconstituted by the antiquarian Percy Manning, the side first appeared in his lecture at the Corn Exchange, Oxford, in March 1899, where they earned a feature in the local press. In the nine months before encountering Sharp, the team danced in the locality on at least three further occasions (Chandler, 1993:148-156; Neal, 1915:160). Yet within Sharp's lifetime, *Music and Letters* would report that:

> He was not the first to preach the gospel of healthy song, nor has he been by any means alone in the good work; but of this health-giving dance we should, but for him, have known nothing (01.01.1921:3) [*my emphasis*].

In view of what has already been said, perhaps it was no coincidence that this magazine had been instigated by Sharp. In presenting this, its fifth number, the editor 'hop[ed] for his approval' (January 1921:3). This founding editor, incidentally, was none other than A.H. Fox

Strangways (Howes, 1969[b]:11; *Musical Times*, 1948:174).

Sharp noted the tunes from William Kimber, the concertina player, who had recently rejoined the side after briefly appearing in its earlier incarnation of a decade earlier (Chandler, 1993:123,151,156): twenty years later, Sharp would present Kimber with a 'substantial' cheque to celebrate the anniversary of both their first meeting and 'the commencement of the revival' (*Musical Times*, 01.02.1920:81-3). Sharp 'instantly' recognised 'an art of great value' (Shaw, 1921:4), but made no immediate use of his discovery; 'beyond harmonizing and orchestrating the tunes he did not see what to do with them' (Fox Strangways, 1933:27-8).

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Sharp had long been a devotee of German music. The story is told, implausible as it seems, that Adelaide was chosen as his Australian destination because of Sharp's admiration for Beethoven's song of the same name. In 1889, and still in Australia, he left public service in order to concentrate on a career as a popular composer. With Guy Boothby, Sharp wrote *Dimple's Lovers*, a one-act play with songs, and a larger-scale work, *Sylvia, or the Marquis and the Maid*; both, it is said, in the style of Schumann.

Back in England, Sharp quoted his 'adored' Wagner in a letter to his wife at time of their engagement in 1893, and their first two children, born in 1894 and 1896 respectively, were given the Wagnerian middle names of Iseult and Tristan (Anderson, 1994:630,643; Fox Strangways,

1933:8,9,11,15,18,21).

Perhaps the name of his third child, Joan Audrey, born in July 1898, reflects a conscious turning away from German influence on Sharp's part. Fox Strangways (1933:28) suggests that Sharp had for some time been dissatisfied with the ordinary musical education; based, as it was, on music of German origin. English children needed something else, he decided, and - despite the existence of such works as John Hullah's book of *58 English Songs* (1871) - compiled *A Book of British Song for Home and School* with the intention of providing it.

In his *Preface* to this collection, Sharp noted that

> ... in collecting these songs, I have confined myself to those which are traditional, and, being chiefly of folk origin, are of assured humanity. I have further selected only those which are British, believing that such will appeal more directly to boys and girls, and will form a better educational groundwork than those songs which reflect the customs and ideals of other nations (1902:vi).

No nation has a richer store of traditional music than England, Sharp declaimed, yet none is more prone to undervalue its heritage. The English, showing 'a strange incapacity of appreciating our own folk-song', had been too ready to accept the charge of being an unmusical race. He praised the recent endeavours of the folk-song pioneers, who ensured that 'we have now, by the addition of this late but precious harvest to our garner, a collection of national song such as any nation might be proud of'. Indeed, the charge that the English were an unmusical race had been 'finally removed' by the discovery of this 'past

output' (1902:vi-vii).

The object of his volume was '[t]o place this musical heritage within reach of every home and schoolroom, so that it may be indeed part of our children's birthright'. At this stage, Sharp found both patriotic national songs and folk-songs equally suited to his purpose. The latter, comprising less than half of the total, had been culled from such texts as Broadwood and Fuller Maitland's *English County Songs*, and Baring Gould's *Songs of the West*.

With no sense of irony, Sharp criticised William Chappell - who, incidentally, had died a decade and a half earlier - for having worked mainly among books, and making

> no serious effort to gather together those innumerable songs and dances, which have been handed down among our peasantry from generation to generation, and are still to be heard in country places (1902:vi).

For Sharp, having taken his compilation from printed sources, had still yet to hear the actual singing of folk-song for himself.

The following year he took steps to remedy this by capitalising on yet another contact from his Australian years. Sharp had met Charles Marson in Adelaide in July 1889, and the pair became such friends that, within the year, Sharp would give away the bride at Marson's wedding (Anderson, 1994:628). Marson now held the position of curate of Hambridge, in Somerset, where Sharp went to visit him in September 1903.

Perhaps Sharp chose it as one of the 'country places' where he had already decided such songs should still be

found: although a profile which appeared in the *Musical Times* suggests that he had been 'specially attracted' to Somerset because of Marson's 'intimate acquaintance with the neighbourhood and its people' (01.10.1912:640).

In 'discovering' what Broadwood referred to as 'singers of the right kind' (*Journal of the Folk Song Society*, 1902:I:4:140), the mediation of clergymen was far from uncommon. At roughly this same time Vaughan Williams met his first singers at a Parish Tea at Ingrave, to which he had been invited by the daughters of the vicar for this specific purpose (Palmer, 1983:viii). It was doubtless the most straightforward means of encountering the type of people from whom 'the most interesting specimens' were thought to be 'most readily obtained'.

In the light of experience, the leaflet entitled *Hints to Collectors of Folk Music*, as issued by the Folk-Song Society - and said by Lucy Broadwood to have 'stimulated many people to start the work of collecting the songs of our people in the right way' (1905:109) [*my emphasis*] - listed these 'classes' as

> ... gardeners, artisans, gamekeepers, shepherds, rustic labourers, gipsies, sailors, fishermen, workers at old-fashioned trades, such as weaving, lace-making and the like, as well as domestic servants of the old school, especially nurses. Inmates of workhouses will also be found to know many old songs, and dwellers in towns may best be able to carry on the work of collecting traditional music by applying to such (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1904:640).

It is worth mentioning that when George B. Gardiner and his companions collected songs in Hampshire, their work was interrupted by the onset of hay-making. They turned

their attention to the workhouses, 'where to their delight singers were readily available' (Lloyd, 1984:44).

Sharp would later write that his footsteps had been guided into Somerset by 'chance' (1907:viii). But he also acknowledged that the value to the collector of an introduction from the local parson or squire 'would be difficult to exaggerate'; for without such assistance, 'much precious time is wasted in preliminaries' (1905:2). Indeed, before setting out to collect the sword dances of Yorkshire, Northumberland and Durham through 1912 and 1913, he would send a reply post-card to 'the incumbent of every parish in these counties' (Fox Strangways, 1933:102).

Whilst Fox Strangways thought it 'natural' that Sharp should first look to Hambridge as a possible hunting-ground for songs, Marson himself, resident throughout the previous eight years, had evidently been in ignorance of its existence there. Marson would later compare folk-song to the duck-billed platypus, in that 'you can live within a few yards of it and never suspect its existence' ([*quoted in*] 1933:33).

It was in Marson's garden at Hambridge that one of the most famous events in English folk-song history, Sharp's 'introduction to the live folk-song', is said to have occurred. Sharp was sitting in the garden, talking to Mattie Kay, a young Lancastrian singer who was a member of his own household. He suddenly became aware that John England, the gardener, was quietly singing *The Seeds of Love* to himself as he mowed the lawn:

> Sharp whipped out his note-book, took down the tune, and afterwards persuaded John to give him the words. He went off and harmonized the song, and that same evening it was sung at a choir supper by Mattie Kay, Sharp accompanying. The audience was delighted; as one said, it was the first time that the song had been put into evening-dress. John was proud, but doubtful about the 'evening-dress'; there had been no piano to *his* song (1933:33).

But perhaps this event, if it ever actually happened in the manner presented, was less fortuitous than the story suggests. In Harker's account, not only had Marson 'pressed' Sharp to 'come and hear his gardener', but introduced him to a circuit of sympathetic vicars and squires in the county (1972:223).

We shall now turn to an examination of the results of this networking, specifically in relation to the Mid-Somerset Competitive Musical Festival of 1904.

Reflecting on the number of festivals 'more or less on the same plan' as Kendal that had 'sprung up' during the previous eighteen years, the *Musical Times* readily acknowledged how much was owed to the 'enterprise' of Miss Wakefield (01.06.1903:404). By the following year, thirty six different centres were operating Music Competition Festivals (Wakefield, 1904:1).

One such was the Mid-Somerset Festival, which had been inaugurated in 1902 at Shepton Mallet by Mrs. Mansell of Bayford Lodge, Wincanton. In order to expand the Festival's area of influence, the 1904 Competitions were to be held in Frome for the first time (*Somerset Standard*, 18.03.1904).

Mrs. Mansell announced that the new feature of the competitions that year would be a class for West-country

folk-songs, since 'they wanted if possible to unearth folk-songs which had never yet been published' (*Somerset Standard*, 18.03.1904).

This Competition, held on 21st. April 1904, was open to singers from Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset. Like the rest of the Festival, it was to be run very much on the Kendal model, with the same rules. As the reader may recall, the singers were required to have obtained their songs and airs from a traditional and not from a published source. The prizes would go to the most interesting and least known folk-song, not necessarily to the best singer.

In his capacity as judge, Frank Kidson explained that the object was "to rescue and preserve those old country songs which were now so fast disappearing". The number of entrants was put at ten by the *Somerset and Wiltshire Journal* (23.04.1904), although the reporter for the *Somerset Standard* believed there to be 'a dozen or more' (22.04.1904).

The event was given much less coverage in the local press than its Kendal counterpart, perhaps because there was only one local competitor, Mr. Wesley Green, who sang *The Fly on the Turmit*. Somewhat enigmatically, the *Somerset and Wiltshire Journal* simply reported that 'considerable amusement' was caused by this "attempt to rescue some of their old songs from oblivion" - a remark attributed to the judge, Mr. F. Kidner (*sic*) (23.04.1904).

The winners of the first and second prizes were Mr. King and Mr. J. Durbin, both of Harptree (*Somerset*

Standard, 22.04.1904), and the prizes were given by Mrs. Kettlewell, of Harptree Court (*Somerset and Wiltshire Journal*, 23.04.1904).

Kidson's three years at the Kendal Festival had produced only two songs deemed worthy of publication in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (vol. 1, no. 5, pp. 258-63). These were *Poor Old Horse* and *The Cartmel Hunting Song*, respectively first and third prizewinners in the 1903 Competition. The song which completed this small selection from the Festivals was *It's a Rosebud in June*.

Kidson would later recall:

> At Frome one of the most beautiful of the recently recovered folk-songs was sung by a very aged man. Seated on a chair, with much head-wagging he trolled out his delightfully rustic ditty, while rounds of applause greeted his effort (*Leeds Mercury*, 21.02.1907).

Although he did not name him, Kidson's 'very aged man' was William King, the West Harptree farmer to whom he had awarded first prize. Perhaps surprisingly, the version published in the *Journal* had been noted not by Kidson at the Festival, but 'by Mr. Cecil Sharp at Mendip, near Harptree, 1904'. Even more surprising is the realisation that Sharp had - contrary to Palmer's evident assumption (1986:169) - already collected this song from King in the parlour of *The Castle of Comfort* on Mendip (Howes, 1969[a]:106) on 15th. April 1904 (Karpeles, 1974:180): a full week <u>before</u> the Competition was to take place.

Fox Strangways makes clear that Sharp had spent the Easter holidays of that year exploring the Mendips, 'going there on the invitation of Mr. William Kettlewell of

Harptree Court' (1933:34). When account is taken of the fact that on 21st. April the Competition prizes would be awarded by Kettlewell's wife, one becomes increasingly aware that Somerset was less the virgin territory which Sharp diligently & persistently portrayed, than an existing network of folk-song aficionados to whom Marson had secured Sharp's access.

Looked at another way, it strains credulity to accept that Sharp, with some six months experience as a field collector, would be able, without assistance, to locate and record the future winner of a contest which had been instigated with the express purpose of discovering such singers. Evidently nowhere in this conspiracy of pretence are we told by Sharp or his contemporaries that, as Harker (1972:231;1982:57;1985:191) reveals, King was already well known before his Frome appearance as one of the 'Mendip singing men'.

Sharp's introduction to his *Folk-Songs Noted in Somerset and North Devon*, which appeared in the 1905 number of the *Journal*, noted that:

> with the exception of a few gleanings made during visits to Minehead, Holford, Ilchester, Clevedon, Bridgwater, and Lew Trenchard, all the tunes have been gathered in three small districts - in Hambridge and the villages hard by, where I have enjoyed the hospitality and whole-hearted co-operation of the vicar, the Rev. C.L. Marson; in Mewshaw, North Devon, in company with the rector, the Rev. A.F. de Gex; and in East and West Harptree - thanks to the enthusiasm and to the kindly assistance given me by Mr. and Mrs. Kettlewell of Harptree Court ... There are several others - too many to mention here - from whom I have received like assistance (1905:1-2).

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> *The Press, Watson, is a most valuable institution, if you only know how to use it* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Six Napoleons* [1904]: Conan Doyle, 1928:752).

Within two months of his encounter in Marson's garden, Sharp had begun lecturing on the subject of folk-song. His first venture was on 26th. November 1903 at Hampstead. A group of singers provided vocal illustrations, whilst Sharp's suite of morris dance tunes was played by his Hampstead Conservatoire orchestra. Personal connections, particularly within the *Morning Post*, and again perhaps deriving from Sharp's time in Australia (*see* Anderson, 1994:625), ensured that the event was well covered by the press (Fox Strangways, 1933:47).

Early in the next year, Sharp arranged with T. Lennox Gilmour, his 'friend and publicist' (Judge, 1989:562), and second leader writer of the *Morning Post*, to publish an interview in which Sharp emphasised the need to collect folk-songs without delay. Whilst the County Councils might ultimately undertake the task, perhaps some *ad hoc* organisation or philanthropist could either secure or provide funds in the interim, he suggested.

T.L. Southgate wrote to the *Morning Post* to propose that the Musical Association, made up as it was of professors, heads of music schools, prominent musicians, and so on, was the proper body to deal with this matter. Others suggested the Folk-Song Society. Sharp responded by saying that there had been not a single allusion to English folk-music in the titles of papers read before the Musical Association since 1874: clearly, in the light of my review

in *Chapter 5*, he had not troubled to read the texts. Sharp furthermore asserted that the luminaries of the Musical Association were 'just the people who know little and care less about the subject'. As for the Folk-Song Society, it was, in his opinion, 'moribund' (1933:47-8).

Further correspondence ensued. Directed essentially at the Folk-Song Society, Sharp presented his 'ultimatum' on 2nd. February 1904. He recognised that the Society 'numbers amongst its members many of the best known and most distinguished collectors of folk-song'. But if the old songs still being sung by the 'peasantry of England' were to be preserved for the benefit of future generations, they had to be collected without further delay. In consequence,

> Unless ... the Society is disposed to put its house in order, reorganise its forces, and become an effective instrument, its continued existence is a menace rather than an aid to the cause it nominally espouses ... [it] should surely see that it must now either wake up, clean its slate, and start again on new and efficient lines, or else retire from the scene altogether, so that the field may be occupied by a more effective organisation ([*quoted in*] 1933:49).

Although he had been collecting for less than six months, the Society responded by putting Sharp on the Committee. The first volume of *Folk-Songs from Somerset* would be published before the end of that year; dedicated 'by permission to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales' (1933:52), for whose musical education he was now responsible (Cox, 1993:142).

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Kendal revisited

The General Meeting of the Westmorland Festival was held on 23rd. July 1904. On the strength of a recommendation from the Musical Committee, Mary Wakefield moved that the Folk-Song Class be continued in the next year "on account of its great musical antiquarian value". It was also proposed that money prizes should be offered in this class (*Minute Book of the Westmorland Festival*, 23.07.1904, *Item* 14).

Given Wakefield's distaste for what she referred to as 'pot-hunting', the introduction of a money prize was a significant step. Indeed, Newmarch's sole reference to the folk-song contest is found in a footnote stating that it was the only competition at Kendal to ever carry one (1912:84).

Clearly, despite its perceived potential musical antiquarian value, the competition was not achieving the results - in terms of the discovery of hitherto unpublished songs - which had been envisaged. Cash was to be the remedy, through providing an incentive for those who knew old songs to offer them up for 'rescue'.

The *Westmorland Gazette* had already reported that although the competition was open to the six northern counties, there had been only one competitor from outside Westmorland that year (16.04.1904). This fact had caught the attention of the Kendal Committee as well, and it was proposed that a 'Folk Song Agent' be found in each of the six northern counties, 'so that a better result may be

obtained next year'. The final proposal was that 'Mr. Cecil Sharpe (*sic*) be appointed Judge of this class' (*Minute Book of the Westmorland Festival*, 23.07.1904, *item* 14).

Kidson had judged the first three competitions. Whether he had been unwilling to continue, or whether Sharp had been chosen in preference, I have been unable to ascertain. Cumbria Records Office hold log books for the Westmorland Music Festivals which cover 1885 to 1901, and 1905 to 1908, but not the intervening years. Their *Minute* and *Letter* books do not begin until after the 1904 Festival.

As the 'missing' years are those of Kidson's involvement [1902-4], the Assistant County Archivist suggested that relevant material might be found in the Wakefield family papers, which are still in the custody of the family. My letter of 23rd. April 1995 to the Hon. Mrs.Raynsford, eldest daughter of the late Lord Wakefield, to whom I was referred as 'probably the best contact', remains unacknowledged.

Sharp's name was becoming known at this time as a champion of the folk-song movement. Although a relative newcomer to the scene, he had, as we have seen, contrived to secure a place on the Committee of the Folk-Song Society in the previous year. However, in view of the fact that his name is invariably spelt incorrectly, it was perhaps not yet familiar to everyone.

Kendal 'bids fair to become ere long a national centre of music - a kind of English Bayreuth', Newmarch (1905:90)

wrote with confidence in the year that Sharp became Judge of the Kendal Folk-Song Competition.

There were eleven entries, from eight singers. The *Westmorland Gazette* reported that Mr. Cecil J. Sharpe (*sic*) thought they had a "most interesting" lot of songs, which were far better than the printed words had led him to expect.

The words of *Autumn Leaves*, sung by Mr. J. Nicholson of Bowness, were "well known", and the song was not the "best type" of song. Sharp had heard the tune and words very often and he did not think it was a folk song. It possibly dated back to about 1820.

Mr. J. Collinson of Casterton sang *How Happy We Lived Then*. Sharp was familiar with the words, although perhaps not exactly as they were in Collinson's version. He considered the theme to be one that "folk had always been fond of". The tune was "poor", and "made up of snatches and phrases of other well-known folk tunes". However Mr. Collinson's other entry, the *Cock-fighting Song*, was a "first-rate" one. It had been published in "Mr. Kidson's book", and Sharp knew the words very well. He had never previously heard a good tune to it, but the one he had heard from Mr. Collinson was "really a very fine one indeed". It was "a thoroughly genuine" folk song, "dating back three or four hundred years". The tune, too, was "an old one", and Sharp was very pleased with it.

Down, Down in our Village, from Mr. J.W. Wilson, of Sedbergh, was "not a folk song", and had been published at

least once.

The Reverend T. Heelis of Crosthwaite was another competitor with two songs. *Bonny Boy*, the first of these, had been published, but the tune, which Sharp had never heard before, was "very fine". He concluded that it was "a very old one of the OEolian type and must date back several hundred years". *Capital Wife*, his other song, was another theme that "folk were very fond of". There was "nothing much" about the tune, thought Sharp; it was "pleasant without distinction".

Mr. T. Barber of Windermere's *Ground for the Floor* "was not a folk song". Sharp knew it very well. It was "obviously" an eighteenth century song, or possibly early 19th. century. The same remarks applied to *In the Downhill of Life*, as sung by Mr. R. Braithwaite of Kirkby Lonsdale.

A Bunch of Watercresses, from Miss E. Cookson of Leasgill, was "a great thing with folk singers". There were, asserted Sharp, "a large number of that kind of the mid Victorian era which flooded our villages". *Sailor Boy*, her other song, was well known. He had never heard the particular tune to which it was sung. It was "very interesting", but not a "particularly grand" tune.

Sharp awarded the first prize to Mr. Collinson for the *Cock-fighting Song*, not for its words so much as for the tune. The second prize went to the Reverend T. Heelis for *Bonny Boy*, which "had certainly the best tune after the *Cock-fighting Song*".

Sharp then spoke on the collection of folk songs. He

believed the Westmorland Musical Society's Festival was the "first one of the kind to take up this matter in a public way", and he "could not help but say how pleased he was to recognise that". Those with an interest in the subject were "only too glad" to find "societies of such importance as this taking up the matter".

He went on to say that the collection of folk songs was "really a national question", and, the work being of national importance, it "should be done by the State" [*my emphasis*]. The German and Russian schools of music were founded on folk songs, and Sharp believed that until the folk songs had been collected, "there was not much hope we should found or set upon its legs a really genuine national school of music" (06.05.1905).

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Besides the evident differences in adjudicating style and even competence - Kidson's level of clarity and knowledge is hardly emulated by Sharp - a significant difference can readily be discerned in relation to what folk-song *per se* represented to Sharp and Kidson as individuals. We need do no more than contrast Sharp's statements with Kidson's lecture on *British Folk-Song* - 'a subject upon which he is acknowledged to be one of the highest authorities' - given on 9th. February 1904, again by coincidence at Kendal.

Kidson said that early ballads frequently threw interesting side-lights on customs, manners and trains of thought which were "nowadays quite obsolete", and further

opined that

> If our dialect words, as relics of an earlier language, were to be preserved (as they most assuredly should be), if our folk-lore was to be recalled, if only to be presently laughed at as foolish superstition, if the records of minor events which had helped to make history were to be kept, if anything that bore upon the bygone history of our country was to be remembered, then so should our folk-songs (*Musical Times*, 01.03.1904).

For Kidson, the antiquarian, folk-song was part of the cultural heritage, its overtones redolent of past associations. Composers might utilise its melodies, but it was essentially bereft of ideological content. To Sharp, on the other hand, it was an instrument which could help to shape the national future.

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At the Annual General Meeting held on 5th. August, 1905, it was resolved that either Mr. Cecil Sharpe (*sic*) as first choice, or Miss Lucy Broadwood as second, should judge the 1906 folk-song competition. It was further resolved that the Reverend T. Heelis - a veteran of two previous competitions - should be the Honorary Secretary for the Folk-Song competition. It was reported at the Executive Committee Meeting of 20th. September that Sharp had accepted the engagement as judge 'on the same terms as last year, viz. £3.3.0 for expenses ...' (*Minute Book of the Westmorland Musical Festival*, 20.09.1905).

On behalf of the Honorary Secretary, Gordon Somervell wrote to Sharp on 24th. January, 1906. He understood that Sharp was already committed to judge at the West Somerset competition on 1st. May, and was concerned about having

sufficient time to travel down from Kendal. Somervell apologised for the delay in fixing the date of their own Folk-Song Competition, but confirmed it would be held on either 26th. or 27th. April.

A carbon copy is to be found in the Festival's *Letter Book* (1904-1910:288). Although it had begun with 'Dear Mr. Sharp', Somervell has struck out the 'Mr.', and written after it, 'I don't 'Mr.' you!' We shall shortly discover the context for such an action.

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That year's folk-song competition had seven entrants, four of whom were to sing more than one song; although J. Ellwood, Miss E. Powley and Miss E. Cookson 'scratched' on the day. Sharp, as judge, was described by the *Yorkshire Post* as a 'well-known authority in the South'.

Early, Early, which Miss Powley was to have sung, was performed instead by the Reverend T. Heelis. Although "very fine", it was "one of the commonest of the peasant tunes now to be found in England", said Sharp. There were "numerous valuable forms of it, and this was rather a beautiful one". He did not know the words, but they "obviously" dealt with the Irish revolution of 1798.

The Reverend Heelis continued with *Sweet Primeroses*, the first of his own songs. *Sweet Primeroses* was "one of the most beautiful of English ballads to be found from one end of England to the other". It had been published in the Folk Song Society's journal, and also by Sharp himself in one of his Somerset books.

The second song from Heelis was *The Seeds of Love*. The words were "extremely well known", and there was "scarcely any ballad more frequently sung throughout England than this". In his notebooks at home, Sharp had no fewer than 20 different tunes to which the ballad had been sung. But the one they had heard that morning was new to him, and "very fine and interesting".

Mr. Collinson of Casterton's contributions were *Up Stepped Jack* and *The Thresherman*. The tune of *Up Stepped Jack* was a well-known one and had already been published. *The Thresherman* was a "very ancient ballad". There was a "very fine version" of it in *Sussex Folk-Songs*. Sharp "imagined this was the relic of an ancient tune, which was becoming modernised".

Mr. Sisson of Leasgill sang three songs; *Three Gipsies*, *The Beggar's Will* and *The Squire's Daughter*. The tune of the *Three Gipsies* was "corrupt", thought Sharp, because in a "genuine" folk song the first three lines would "never" be sung in the same tune. The tune of *The Beggar's Will* was "rather interesting" to him, although he "did not know what the song was about". *The Squire's Daughter* was also "very interesting". Sharp "knew something" about the ballad, and felt certain it had been published, but he "could not tell them where". The tune was "a very fine one", which, in the opinion of the *Leeds Mercury* reporter, "merited rescue from oblivion".

Mr. Barrow of Brathay's *The Bonnie Wee Window* "was not, of course, a folk song at all". Evidently the words

had been written by "some village wag", but "it was not of the type that the folk really cared about". Songs of this type were "very popular" in the north of England, said Sharp - an area of the country from which, by implication, the people he thought of as 'folk' were absent. Such songs were nevertheless often valuable, through being related to old tunes. They consequently kept some alive which might otherwise perish.

Sharp considered that the best tunes had been *Seeds of Love* and *The Squire's Daughter*, and awarded the first and second prizes accordingly. Of the winner - and evidently using Sharp's own words - the *Yorkshire Post* reported that

> The quaint, wandering melody, in the Dorian mode, has a character which bespeaks its antiquity, while the comparatively modern words have, no doubt, been fitted to it. Undoubtedly, it is, in its present form, a valuable find and presumably it will be duly recorded in the Journal of the very useful Folk-Song Society.

The *Seeds of Love* had, of course, been the first song Sharp ever heard in the field, only some two and a half years earlier.

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The tunes which this competition had brought forth 'proved' to Sharp that there must be a large number of uncollected folk tunes in the neighbourhood, and he appealed to the audience to "get hold of them before it was too late". The old people from whom the songs were drawn were rapidly passing away, and "two old men from whom he had obtained many songs in the Mendip district were now on their death-beds". To the amusement of his audience, Sharp

related that one old woman had declared to another that if he had only gone to her twenty or thirty years before, she "could a' sung un out of sight" (*Leeds Mercury*, 28.04.1906; *Yorkshire Post*, 28.04.1906; *Westmorland Gazette*, 05.05.1906).

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The *Leeds Mercury* reported that 'after all the great competitions yesterday, the one that most obviously interested the audience was that in the folk-song class' (28.04.1906). The *Yorkshire Post* similarly recognised that '[t]o many, the folk-song competition provided one of the most interesting features of the Festival' (05.05.1906), whilst the *Westmorland Gazette* agreed that the 'great deal of interest' which the competition had generated on its introduction had been maintained through the years. But it was also suggested that, by now, 'one would have thought the list of folk songs, unpublished, would have been pretty well run through' (05.05.1906).

After 1906, the Festival became a biennial event, and, despite its evident previous popularity, the Folk-Song competition had been discontinued at the 1908 Festival. This is a matter to which we will return in due course.

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National song and folk-song

Discourse, under conditions of modernity, is never fixed: it is constantly shaped and refined by legislators. Yet different legislators will inevitably have differing ideas on how this might be done. So when the Board of Education issued their list of songs in *Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers* in 1906, Sharp was 'at once on the alert' (Fox Strangways, 1933:58). What the *Musical Times* characterised as a 'triangular duel' developed between those who were incredulous as to the value of folk-songs, others who used the term to describe only 'old traditional compositely-evolved melodies', and still others who would include 'modern national songs' in this category (01.12.1906:806).

The distinction between the two would later be expressed by Vaughan Williams in his dictum that 'National music is not necessarily folk-song; on the other hand folk-song is, by nature, necessarily national' (1934:114). The reader might recall our earlier discussion of Herder's theories in order to appreciate the theoretical basis of such a differentiation: only one category embodied the 'national spirit'.

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Dr. Arthur Somervell studied with both Stanford and Parry, as well as in Berlin, and became the first recognised composer to set Housman's *Shropshire Lad*. Since 1901 he had been Chief Inspector in Music to the national Board of Education, a post he would hold for over a quarter

of a century (Grove, 1911:IV:503; Scholes, 1970). He was also one of those who subscribed to the wider definition of national song which permitted the incorporation of composed works.

In June 1905 Somervell told a meeting of the Musical Association that the English undervalued music, failing to realise that it was "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of civilising, humanising and educational forces". He proposed that a system of national training based on national songs, as "the expression of emotions and aspirations common to the race", would make a whole nation, from prince to peasant, act as one man and feel as one man. Although he claimed to have "always" advocated the use of these songs, it was

> a perpetual wonder to me to see the strength of the appeal, and the quickness of the response, at all ages and in all classes. The reason for this is obvious, for they set in vibration again, strong, insistent, irresistible, the very same emotions which produced them, and which also produced the actions and convictions of the past, and will reproduce them in right and beautiful continuity.

Somervell asked, rhetorically, "Is this an exaggerated estimate of the power of these songs? I think not" (1905:150,153,157).

After all, the idea of utilising song as an instrument of national cohesion was a strategy which had been exploited before. As a trained professional musician, Charles Dibdin (1745-1814) had, for instance, been only one of a number of ballad writers employed by the Government in the revolutionary period for the purpose of composing songs

'which would arouse the people to the dangers of invasion and awaken a sense of national pride' (Mackerness, 1964:135).

Somervell had nevertheless criticised Sharp's *Book of British Song for Home and School* on the grounds that it had both 'vulgar texts and poor tunes'. He wrote to Sharp (19.10.1904) to explain that he had encountered 'much opposition' in his advocacy of the use of national songs in school, and 'I tell you plainly that your book ... has been the hardest blow that the movement has had' ([*quoted in*] Cox, 1993:74,153-4).

This forthright expression of his views doubtless goes some way to explaining the tone of the letter (26.01.1906), already referred to above, which Somervell's brother Gordon would subsequently send to Sharp in connection with the Kendal Festival.

Somervell intervened in the *Morning Post* correspondence to warn against the rejection of 'any part of our great heritage' through the unwarranted assumption that 'no one belongs to the English 'folk' unless he is at the ploughtail'. In Germany, whence the term 'folk-song' had been borrowed, any song 'which obtains wide national acceptance and survives the test of time is in its essence a song of the German people', and consequently entitled to a place in their *Volksleider* collections ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:807).

In recommending traditional song for use in schools, the Board of Education, like Somervell, had failed to

accommodate the distinction between 'national' and 'folk' songs: just as Sharp himself had done four years earlier in his *Book of British Song for Home and School*. His theoretical position refined, this distinction had become crucial to Sharp. He now lamented the 'well-nigh hopeless task of trying to make him [Somervell] understand' that the two types were

> ... as easily differentiated as chalk from cheese, or to use a more apposite comparison, as the blush rose of the hedgerow from the latest production of the nursery gardener ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:808).

The *Morning Post* (19.04.1906) and the *Daily Chronicle* (22.04.1906) published Sharp's complaint that the 'experiment' would necessarily be deemed a failure unless only 'true' folk-songs were employed for school singing. Stanford replied in the *Daily Chronicle* of 23rd. May 1906. Tried and tested 'songs of and for the nation' were equally viable, he believed, and further suggested that Sharp placed excessive emphasis on the importance of folk-song through having himself been the recent discoverer of some of this material.

The next day saw Sharp's answer in print. Stanford had misunderstood Sharp's differentiation, which distinguished between 'two kinds of music that are fundamentally different from one another':

> ... while the national song is the product of the individual, the folk-song has been evolved by the brains of countless generations of folk-singers and composers. The one is individual, the other communal and racial. They differ not only in the manner of their birth, but in their finished product ([*quoted in*] Fox Strangways, 1933:60).

Further dispute with the Folk-Song Society was to follow. Lord Tennyson, President of the Society, implored Sharp to be more moderate in the expression of his views in 'speeches, reported conversations, and appeals through the Press', since 'The society does not want the whole system of teaching National Music destroyed at the start' (letter to Sharp, 10.06.1906, [*quoted in*] Cox, 1993:144).

Kidson similarly tried to 'heal the breach' between Sharp and Somervell. Although the form which this intervention took is unclear, it appears that Kidson was prepared to take Sharp's part in the matter, hoping 'things will pull round your way' (letter 15.09.1906). But the Society's Annual Report endorsed the Board of Education's *Suggestions*, and Sharp felt himself compromised.

'You know it is so nice to feel 'in the circle'', the collector Gavin Greig wrote to Lucy Broadwood (letter, 26.12.1907). But Sharp saw things differently: for him, that particular 'circle' had been nothing more than a springboard. Drive and ambition had secured his place at the centre of folk-song discourse, and he was intent on determining the direction it now took. His attempt to establish his own position was to result in the publication of *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (1907), which represented 'a kind of manifesto of Mr. Sharp's line of thought' (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1912). It is to a detailed consideration of Sharp's thought that we now turn.

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Chapter 8: ENGLISH FOLK-SONG: Sharp's Conclusions

> *The counterpart to the imagined future is the imagined past* (Chase and Shaw, 1989:9).

Sharp's *English Folk-Song: some conclusions* is a manual in which he legislates what folk-song is, which songs are folk-songs, and what they represent. The centrality of folk-song to Sharp's legislative programme will ensure that national revival is not limited to the musical sphere.

This chapter also considers subsequent challenges to the assumptions on which the viability of Sharp's theories rest.

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Sharp's dispute with the education authorities over the introduction of folk-songs into the elementary school had centred around their 'misconception' that 'the folk-song proper and the 'merely popular song' were generically identical'. To those other than 'expert' - a term, incidentally, which Sharp never hesitated to use in relation to himself - in the subject, it might seem a matter of 'small moment'. But a 'very important and fundamental principle' was involved, 'upon the clear understanding of which the whole question turned'.

The subject was 'too large, and of too subtle and complex a nature' to be adequately dealt with through the correspondence columns of newspapers, so Sharp presented his case in *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (1907:x-xi).

The evolutionary origin of folk-song was the key to

Sharp's thesis. Central to his demand for 'the re-introduction of folk-songs into our national life' was the 'assumption' that 'folk-music' was 'generically distinct' from 'ordinary music'. In Sharp's formulation, the composition of the individual was limited in both outlook and appeal. But as a 'communal and racial product', folk-song was 'the expression, in musical idiom, of aims and ideals that are primarily national in character':

> Once establish the fact that the folk-song has not been made by the one but evolved by the many, and its national character and its fitness to serve a national purpose follow as a natural consequence (1907:x).

Sharp's insistence, in view of the stance he had adopted, was understandable. His research in Somerset had convinced him that, despite assertions to the contrary, true folk-song still existed in England. Indeed, it was 'at least as richly endowed as any other European nation' (1907:vii,127).

At the same time, a rich mix of national romantic ideology and evolutionary theory led him to ascribe qualities to folk-song which made it the perfect instrument for nothing less than national regeneration.

Folk-Song in England

Carl Engel, encountered in *Chapter 5* as the mediator of Herder's theories, clearly had a significant influence on the development of Sharp's thought - as Sharp himself acknowledged (1907:2). To assess the musical potential of a nation, Sharp stipulated that search must be made in the 'remote country districts' which had escaped both the

influence of 'educated persons' and their 'modern ideas'. This was the last refuge of the 'common people', the 'unlettered ... native and aboriginal inhabitants', whose 'own music, if they have any, will be the outcome of a purely natural instinct'. This 'spontaneous utterance' was '*folk-song*' (1907:1,3-4).

In short, ideas which had their origin in the cultural context of mid-eighteenth century Latvia were to be directly applied to Edwardian Somerset.

Engel (1866:173) had particularly remarked that the rural population of England appeared to sing less than those of most other European countries. Yet - at the very time Engel specifically commented to the contrary - Sharp was convinced that

> The evidence is overwhelming that, as recently as thirty or forty years ago, every country village in England was a nest of singing birds (1907:105).

Since that time, however, folk-song had gone into decline. In common with virtually every collector who both preceded and followed him, Sharp believed that he was taking the last opportunity to recover the songs. The tunes were still of the 'utmost value', but he had already felt obliged to admit that as far as the words were concerned, 'the twentieth century collector is a hundred years too late' (1905:2).

Exclusively confined to what remained of the 'peasantry', and 'unaffected' by the art music of the 'cultivated', contemporary folk-singers guarded their songs with 'jealous care'. Yet, in his pursuit of the 'great and

important national work' of collecting and re-popularising the songs, Sharp had learnt that it was no more than a 'waste of time' to call upon singers under the age of sixty (1907:vii,xi,104,106,119).

Those aged between sixty and seventy Sharp thought the very best, through being at the same time 'old enough to remember the genuine traditional ballad, and young enough to be able to sing it' (1905:2).

English National Music

'A country that is too arid to grow wild flowers will scarcely win renown for the beauty of its gardens', Sharp argued. So the most obvious beneficiary of 'the sudden and unexpected discovery of an immense mass of melody, not only rich in emotion, but possessing withal a distinctive and national flavour', would be 'the musical life of England' (1907:1,127).

Certain 'essentially and demonstrably national' attributes characterise the products of 'every existing School of Music'. Although the musician speaks in a 'universal' language, he nevertheless betrays his nationality in his music 'every whit as much as he does in his speech' (1907:129). Yet since Purcell, the 'educated classes' had 'patronised the music of the foreigner', with the inevitable result that 'there exists at the present day no National School of English music' (1907:129).

Sharp asked whether 'the land of Shakespeare' was to 'go down to posterity as the only nation in all Europe incapable of original musical expression'. Or could the

recently recovered English folk-song, as 'music ... which is distinctively national and English, and, therefore, inherently different from that of every other nation in the world', form the basis of an English National School of composition, 'comparable with any one of the great Continental Schools of Music?' (1907:129).

Quoting Mary Wakefield's friend Mrs. Newmarch, Sharp pointed to the example of Glinka, who had shown that once 'some musician of genius' has demonstrated how 'the people's music may be translated into terms of art-music', the 'musical idiom of the nation' might be 'utilised and developed by composers of the same nationality' (1907:131).

The growth of the Russian school of music had been both 'so swift and so recent' that it was possible to examine every stage in its history 'with the greatest minuteness'. This Russian example provided 'many lessons' for England (1907:131).

England had been a musical nation, and the rediscovery of folk-song afforded 'incontrovertible evidence that, as a nation, we possess a natural and inherent musical faculty of no mean order':

> The tree, therefore, is sound at the root. If in past seasons it has failed to flourish, to put forth branches and leaves and to bear fruit, this is not from any lack of vitality, but simply because it has been neglected, because it has not received the necessary attention and cultivation, because, in short, of the faults of its environment... (1907:132).

England had both the musical ability and the folk-song. But progress was conditional on the restoration of folk-song 'to the nation':

> When every English child is, as a matter of course, made acquainted with folk-songs of his own country, then, from whatever class the musician of the future may spring, he will speak in the national musical idiom' (1907:132,133).

Once the younger generations had been familiarised with folk-song, the task of restoring English music to what Sharp thought of as its 'rightful position' could be left to them. They could do for England what Glinka and his followers did for Russia. Even the recent absence of English music could be turned into a virtue:

> That we have lain fallow, musically speaking, for two or more centuries is all in our favour. There is nothing so fertile as virgin soil (1907:133).

Education and National Regeneration

> *It is education that must give souls a national formation, and direct their opinions and tastes in such a way that they will be patriotic by inclination, by passion, by necessity* (Rousseau [*quoted in*] Bauman, 1991:65).

The properties ascribed to folk-song extended much further than musical regeneration. The instrument of musical revival could be used in pursuit of national revival, with an inevitable uniform improvement in musical taste, the national character, and the patriotic spirit.

Whilst 'coarse' and 'vulgar' popular music predominated in England, all the other European nations had preserved their folk-songs and 'nourished their children upon them'. In so doing, 'a cultivated soil has been created, which will not permit the growth of the noxious weeds, which flourish so luxuriantly with us' (1907:137-40).

The Board of Education had to accept that the folk-

song was generically distinct from all other forms of music, thus warranting a special place in the educational scheme (1907:139). It formed an ideal basis for musical education, providing music which was of high quality, yet at the same time 'natural, pure and simple'. In addition, the evolutionary progression from folk-song to art music would be emulated by using folk-song in this manner. If this scheme were to be followed in both state and private schools, 'not only would the musical taste of the nation be materially raised, but a beneficient and enduring effect would be produced upon the national character'.

Sharp thought the education system too cosmopolitan, producing 'citizens of the world rather than Englishmen'. The folk-songs employed must be of the same nationality as the children, since 'it is Englishmen, English citizens, that we want'. Patriotism could be encouraged by giving children the 'distinctive products' of their race; the language, national sports, pastimes, dances (1907:134-6) and folk-songs:

> ... those simple ditties which have sprung like wild flowers from the very hearts of our countrymen, and which are as redolent of the English race as its language (1907:136).

Possession of these 'race-products' would make the English child 'know and understand his country and his countrymen far better than he does at present', ensuring that

> ... he will love them the more, realize that he is united to them by the subtle bond of blood and of kinship, and become, in the highest sense of the word, a better citizen, and a truer patriot (1907:136).

The introduction of folk-songs into schools would not only affect the musical life of England, but would 'tend also to arouse that love of country and pride of race, the absence of which we now deplore' (1907:136).

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The Challenge

Even before the publication of *English Folk Song*, the *Musical Times* had questioned the value of collecting folk-song on the grounds that many of the 'old ditties' were 'poor, dreary stuff', and 'the game not worth the candle'. Yet their imminent and irretrievable loss meant it was only 'common-sense' to 'collect *galore*', leaving the question of value until later (01.01.1906:26).

The year had not ended before the *Musical Times* again questioned the adequacy of the folk-song movement's programme, expressing 'some surprise' that folk-songs in general 'should be regarded with something approaching superstitious awe and be credited with omnipotent potentialities':

> We are told impressively that the seeds of the future specifically national art are to be found in this type of music ... We are to reconstruct and quicken the nation's art by looking backward and accepting an inheritance we have hitherto suffered ourselves to neglect (01.12.06:806).

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Whilst liberally laced with words like 'facts', 'truth', and 'scientific', which undoubtedly lend an authoritative air to the whole, the content of Sharp's text was simply a reflection of characteristically modern constructs.

We might for instance consider the expression 'common people'. Sharp claims to use this 'strictly in its scientific sense', employing it with reference to

> those whose mental development has been due not to any formal system of training or education, but solely to environment, communal association, and direct contact with the ups and downs of life (1907:3).

This is a definition which the reader may or may not consider reasonable, and we shall in due course examine Kidson's reaction to it (*Musical Times*, 01.01.1908:23-4). But its unmistakeable similarity to the ontological argument for the existence of a supreme being - whose existence is established solely by definition (Popkin and Stroll, 1986:187) - seems to place the origin of Sharp's ideas less in the realm of 'science' than that of philosophy. His 'common people', after all, are simply a category whose existence and consequent definition has been determined by the requirements of his 'folk-song' construct and <u>its</u> definition. Yet not only is that presented as 'scientific' in its turn, but its elaboration is as well:

> Folk-music is the ungarbled and ingenuous expression of the human mind, and on that account it must reflect the essential and basic qualities of the human mind (1907:34).

History was similarly appropriated in order to legitimise Sharp's claims. He had written to the *Morning Post* to assert that 'history' provided 'not a single instance of a national school of music that has been founded upon anything else than national folk-music' ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:806). But when subordinated to ideology, history - as we saw in *Chapter*

One - will 'prove' whatever is required of it. Again, we might consider the following statement:

> The relation between German or Russian art-music and German or Russian folk-music must be a close and intimate one. That much we may assume *a priori* ... (1907:130).

A priori knowledge is that which is 'universal and necessary and independent of experience' (Popkin and Stroll, 1986:161-2): in short, it is certain. But why should we accept Sharp's statement as self-evident fact? Simply because his model decreed that it should be so. Indeed, this belief was not only inherent to, but, by virtue of the properties supposedly bestowed on folk-song by its communal origin, at the foundation of Sharp's construct. By dressing assumptions up as 'facts' and presenting them as integral components of his 'scientific' theory, Sharp courted the risk of his carefully constructed model turning into a house of cards.

Perhaps, on reflection, 'carefully' is a less appropriate word than 'assiduously', for if Sharp had been exercised care in the compilation of his theory it would have borne fewer of the internal inconsistencies which, when highlighted, forced on him the continual revision of his position.

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The reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* noted that Sharp's theories, as expressed 'in different times and places', had undergone considerable modification even before *English Folk-Song* came to print. In the chapters dealing with the origin and evolution of folk-song, for

instance, Sharp had managed to both expand and dilute his theory to the unfortunate extent that 'he shows that he is in accord with those whom he has been opposing most vehemently' (23.01.1908:26). Conversely, of course, Sharp's position had necessarily been rendered more difficult to criticise when the critic could rarely be certain of establishing what this position actually was. As any shot knows, a moving target is the hardest to hit.

Interestingly, much of this review focuses on Sharp's personal approach to his subject; an inevitable concomitant, perhaps, of the position Sharp had adopted in relation to the wider movement. In consequence, although the reviewer recognises that it is 'exceedingly difficult' to decide which of several versions of a folk-song is the best, he criticises Sharp's implication that 'the versions which are most authoritative have become so by the accident of being discovered by Mr. Sharp rather than by some other collector'.

Similarly, in noting Sharp's assertion that 'the Englishman's habit of self-depreciation has often occasioned remark', the reviewer comments that it is evidently a habit which, in his own case, Sharp 'seems to have conquered ... fairly successfully'.

Churlishly, perhaps, it was suggested that if communal additions to the original germ will always be improvements, it did not seem worth collecting versions 'which will not be as good as those of the same songs after a few years' or centuries' more evolution'; it was also unfair, since Sharp

is clear in his belief that the evolutionary pinnacle had already been reached.

The reviewer recognised that the 'mere accumulation' of the 'vast wealth of English folk-music, unsuspected in the last generation', was not in itself enough, and analysis of these 'copious treasures' should at some point follow. Sharp's 'untiring energy' in gathering the songs of Somerset, for which he deserved 'both praise and support', had 'made up for his comparatively late advent into the ranks of the collectors'. But, having read Sharp's 'professedly scientific treatise', the reviewer concluded that 'he might well leave to others the work of analysing the treasure he finds' (23.01.1908:26-7).

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Some five years later the influential critic Ernest Newman - already encountered in *Chapter 6* as a staunch supporter of Mary Wakefield's Competitive Music Festival movement - wrote an article entitled *The Folk-Song Fallacy* for the *English Review*. Of all the challenges to Sharp's theories, the *Musical Times* thought this the most notable (01.10.1912:642).

Newman recognised that a good deal had been said in the previous few years about the 'national spirit' in music, and the necessity of founding a 'national English school' on native folk-song in order to rise to the level of France or Germany. What troubled Newman was whether the people who talked in this manner had ever given much thought to the terms they used, especially since '[t]he

vaguer and more general a word is, the more cautious we should be in our use of it' (1912[a]:255).

Whilst Sharp and others bandied around 'high sounding' terms like the 'national musical idiom', Newman was concerned as to whether it could be shown to have 'any meaning whatever in terms of concrete fact'. The use of 'race' as a way of accounting for differences between the arts and customs of nations was 'the most superficial' of 'pseudo-explanations', and Newman provided examples to demonstrate his contention that 'the whole theory of 'racial characteristics' in music is flawed to the very centre' (1912[a]:255-7).

Newman acknowledged Sharp's *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* as the 'fullest and ablest English statement' of the claims of the 'folk-song partisans'. Yet there were 'other rocks in the course of the frail bark of the folk-theory argument'. Why, for instance, in the process of a song becoming a communal product, should the assumption be that it would always be bettered in the process, when it might instead be worsened? When, by Sharp's admission, it was rare to find the same song sung in precisely the same form by two different singers, which one should be taken as the 'communal' form, and which represented the 'national character?' Again, it was implicit in the 'communal' theory that 'the random shots of a lot of unmusical peasants' led to 'perfection of feeling and of form'. But were the variations noted from different singers simply attributable to 'sheer musical incompetence', rather than the 'artistic

virtue' which is suggested by this 'idealisation' of 'the rustic taste of the past?' (1912[a]:258-262).

The question also arose of how one can be sure that a folk-song which is supposed to express the spirit of a given community is really the product of that community. Newman was critical of Sharp's 'facile pseudo-distinctions' in relation to supposed Celtic and Anglo-Saxon characteristics, which were 'altogether too fanciful and superficial' (1912[a]:263-4). His preference was instead for the methods of someone like Kidson:

> We know that patient research proves the foreign *provenance* of many a melody that has always been accepted as unquestionably 'national'. Mr. Frank Kidson has recently made merry play with the Welsh nationalists, showing that certain so-called old Welsh tunes are English (1912[a]:264).

Presumably Newman here refers to two articles which Kidson had submitted to the *Musical Times*: *Welsh Music from an English Point of View* (01.02.1911:93-95), and *Welsh National Music* (01.05.1911:306-7). Through 'mistaken patriotism' or 'lack of knowledge', various Welsh editors had assigned what Kidson felt to be 'abnormal antiquity' to Welsh airs. Acknowledging that 'any attempt to set things right' would inevitably be interpreted as 'an attack upon 'gallant little Wales'', Kidson nevertheless clung to his conviction that

> It is only from those who are prepared to seek out facts and to draw logical conclusions, without reference to national bias, that we can hope for anything like a satisfactory account of a particular nation's music.

Indeed, in Kidson's view, as sanctioned by Newman,

> The antiquary, musical or otherwise, who allows patriotism to interfere with his just balance of facts, is a harmful and pernicious person (01.02.1911:93).

The *Musical Herald* wrote of Kidson that 'he is quite indifferent as to the nationality of a song. What he cares about is its authenticity' (01.08.1913).

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Newman considered that talk of 'national' music was 'a little wild'. National characteristics were generalisations which everyone used, but they were nothing more than that. So

> 'The' Englishman is a fiction. And when we speak of other nations as capable of being summed up under a single formula of this kind, it is only because we have not sufficient acquaintance with them to see them in detail. Were it not so, we should not commit the gross error of speaking of '*the* Russian school of music', as if that vast empire, with its multiplicity of languages and of human types, had but one mind and one purpose (1912[a]:266).

Incidentally, we should not forget that the Latvians, whose distinctive culture had provided the inspiration for Herder's theories, would at this time have been included amongst these same 'Russians'.

If there were no such thing as 'the' English spirit, how could folk-songs ever have expressed it, or how could it be expressed at present, either with the help of the folk-song or without it? Newman asked whether the music of *Gerontius* would have been any the better if Elgar had known all the folk-songs of England, or any the worse if he had never known one of them. It was no more than sentimentality to suggest that the 'artless outpourings' of the past could

have, 'in the majority of cases, any but an antiquarian interest for us today' (1912[a]:267-8).

In conclusion, Newman asserted that

> The truly great artists are artists of the world. It is only the little ones who cannot see, or do not want to see, beyond their parish, their province, or even their country (1912[a]:268).

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Sharp's response appeared in July. He welcomed Newman's criticism, in the belief that opposition would strengthen a valid case, rather than destroy it. In any event, '[t]he question is of national interest and merits discussion' (1912:542).

Although the central tenet of *English Folk-Song* had been its supposed communal and evolutionary origin - 'not a question of merely an academic interest, but one upon which many practical considerations depend' (1907:x) - Sharp appears to have accepted his vulnerability on this point, and that question had <u>instead</u> become 'academic' and 'of minor importance'. The crucial question now concerned the 'intrinsic value' of English traditional music, and the effect its discovery might have on English art-music (1912:549).

Newman's position, as summarised - and greatly simplified - by Sharp, was that

> He will not admit that there is any inherent, organic connection between folk-and art-music; and he ridicules the notion that English composers can derive any benefit from studying English folk-song (1912:547).

If a nation had distinctive attributes, they would be evident in its music, as in everything else, asserted

Sharp. In fairness, he was far from alone in making this assumption, and we might note that Hubert Parry had recently written that

> The fact that different races have strongly marked differences of taste and talent in music is so aggressively obvious that it is almost superfluous to adduce arguments to prove it ... (1911:152).

But in Sharp's view, Newman was a 'whole-hogger', refusing to acknowledge any such distinctive qualities in different nationalities. To Sharp, this was self-evidently incorrect; although he did not 'pretend that it is easy to define in set terms what is meant by a national characteristic' (1912:542-3).

Newman had pointed out that Napoleon, the greatest Frenchman of modern times, had been 'pure Italian', whilst Wellington, the greatest English general, was 'an Irishman'. In German music, Beethoven had been 'half Dutch', Liszt 'pure Hungarian', and Mahler a 'Bohemian Jew'. Yet these composers, as well as others Newman mentioned, had been 'supposed, in some mysterious way, to express a 'national idiom' in their works (Newman, 1912[a]:257-8).

In citing men who were 'racially alien to the nations in which they became famous', Newman was 'confusing race with nationality', retorted Sharp. In now stating that 'Nationality is the controlling factor, not race', Sharp introduced a new criterion which had been absent from *English Folk-Song*, where race and nationality had been treated as interchangeable concepts. 'But I need not labour

the point', he continued, since 'National traits are patent to the most superficial observer' (Sharp, 1912:544-5).

Sharp then went on to restate the beliefs which Newman had already criticised. A nation has attributes of its own; these will colour its music; and 'each nation must ultimately evolve a musical style':

> And this national musical idiom is, I contend, always to be found in its purest, crudest, and least diluted form in a nation's traditional music. Just as the mixture is strongest at the bottom of the bottle, so are the peculiar characteristics of a nation concentrated in its humblest class (1912:545).

Sharp, now in his element, gave an exposition of some of his favourite themes. The peasantry were the class least affected by 'alien and outside' influences ... '[u]nlettered and untravelled', their art was 'spontaneous' and 'natural' ... and, moreover, the recent discovery of folk-song

> ... **proves incontestably** [*my emphasis*] that music of a primitive, unsophisticated type actually does exist in, and is indigenous to, England; and that, consequently, the development of music in this country on national lines is at least possible and legitimate (1912:545).

Although scorned by Newman, the songs could only have been found among the 'uncultivated' people, since '[w]ild flowers do not grow in hothouses'. As the 'natural, spontaneous product of uncultivated minds', folk-songs

> ... must of necessity be beautiful, in the same way, and for the same reason, that all elemental things, the trees, clouds, hills, and rivers, are beautiful (1912:546).

If Newman did not agree with him, it was 'all in the point of view'. He should be less analytical and 'try to

feel the beauty of the folk-song'. He might then 'begin to understand what we are all driving at'. Newman's position as critic was akin to the horticulturalist, who sees 'little to admire in the wild flower'. But the 'true lover' of flowers should be particularly attracted by 'wild natural specimens', the 'beautiful and tender things' without which the conservatory plant could neither exist nor flourish.

The problem with music recently written in England was that the 'national note', 'which sings in the music of every other nation', was absent from it. Its style was nothing but a 'pale reflection' of some 'alien' one: German, French, or Russian.

> And no wonder! We have been trying to acclimatise highly developed foreign flowers by transplanting them to our own soil, to which they are, of course, unsuited, instead of taking our own native flowers, studying them, cultivating them in our own natural soil, and developing them under natural conditions (1912:546).

The English composer should 'discard his cosmopolitan notions', study his own native music, and form his own style. Indeed, 'history tells us' that this is what all successful composers, both past and present, have done (1912:546-7,549).

Once a national style had developed, the 'need and value' of the folk-song model diminished. But England was not yet at that stage, and as long as music students remained ignorant of English traditional music, they would acquire the 'wrong kind' of technique, and 'continue to pour forth diluted Brahms, Wagner, and Debussy'. He hoped

that one of the music schools would test his hypothesis by including the study and analysis of English folk-song as an integral part of its curriculum (1912:548).

If argument failed to establish the veracity of Sharp's position, there was always strength of numbers to fall back on. Amongst fellow believers he cited Wagner, various composers of the Russian school, and Grieg, who had himself 'managed ... to evolve a distinct style and technique of his own, based upon the musical idiom of the Norwegian folk-song'. Sharp was prepared to acknowledge, however, that 'I may be wrong, of course, and Mr. Newman may be right'. But if this was the case, he was at least 'sinning in good company' (1912:547-9).

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The August number of the *English Review* carried Newman's response. Newman had already cautioned Sharp on his 'too facile' use of such terms as 'the' Frenchman and 'the' German. But Sharp had now 'invented' a new abstraction, 'the' critic, who also had to have similarly fixed characteristics. Newman recognised that

> It seems to be an incorrigible habit with Mr. Sharp to parcel out everything and everybody into categories. He is not happy till he has - or fancies he has - us all nicely bottled and labelled (1912[b]:65).

Which is, after all, what we would expect of a legislator. Sharp had, moreover, simply repeated the 'old fallacies' which Newman had argued against in his original article:

> He imagines he has proved things when he has merely said them, and that the arguments against a theorem can be refuted by a bold reassertion of it (1912[b]:66).

Whilst Sharp thought it 'clear' that a distinctive school of English music could only develop from a national style based on English folk-music, Newman considered this 'formula' to be 'the emptiest verbalism'. The very point which Sharp 'so confidently assumes' was the one under dispute, and Newman requested that Sharp should '*prove* his theory, not simply repeat these meaningless catchwords' (1912[b]:66).

We have already noted how Sharp, when presented with Newman's awkward examples, had declared that nationality, rather than race, was the 'controlling factor'. This reconceptualisation had enabled Sharp to assert that despite his Italian descent, Napoleon had been born a French subject, and 'in character was a typical Frenchman' (1912:544).

To Newman, this distinction between race and nationality was 'bogus'. Seizing on the above example, Newman declared

> It took ... generations of purely Italian factors to make Napoleon, at his birth, an Italian. Yet by the mere fact of living in France for a few years he can shed all these precious, incommunicable, unpurchasable national characteristics of his own race, and acquire the national characteristics of an alien race so thoroughly that he becomes 'typical' of it! The whole essence of Mr. Sharp's plea for a 'national' school of music founded on the 'national' folk-song is that the Englishman or the Frenchman is born with the 'national mind', which he ought to express, and *must* express if he is sincere and unspoiled. But if an Italian soldier can become a 'typical Frenchman', what is it to hinder an Italian musician from becoming a typical German composer? Is not Mr. Sharp's theory of nationality here trembling on the dizzy verge of nonsense? (1912[b]:66-7).

Newman accepted that a person's artistic output is generated and surrounded by particular influences, but it was increasingly inappropriate to ascribe stylistic differences to national characteristics. Marked differences of mental outlook and of idiom may be attributed to marked differences in environment, and it was inevitable that these differences would become less noticeable as 'advancing civilisation' breaks down the old isolation of one European community from another.

Newman additionally criticised Sharp for his failure to appreciate that the 'principle of differentiated characteristics' operates not only in relation to two nations, '*but also as regards the same nation at different periods*'. Sharp insisted on the 'oneness' and continuity of the 'national mind', but Newman believed the cultured Londoner of his day to have more points of mental difference from the Londoner of five, or even two, centuries ago than from the contemporary cultured Parisian or Berliner (1912[b]:68).

Newman concluded that Sharp had 'no clear ideas at all' upon the question of nationality in music. He was 'merely trafficking in catchwords [and] pseud-ideas' (1912[b]:70).

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The *Musical Times* commented that 'Probably all that can be said for and against the folk-song cult will be found in these interesting articles tersely and epigrammatically expressed'. They would not presume to

'hold the scales in balancing these conflicting arguments', but believed that if folk-music were to become the basis of a national art, it would have to 'drift into that channel naturally, or not at all' (01.10.1912:642-3).

Yet in the *Referee*, 'Lancelot' firmly took Newman's part in the discussion. At the utmost, nationality in music could only be reflective of a people in the early stages of national life. The great composers had been little influenced by folk-music, growing out of the confines of nationality into 'the universality of humanity'. To advise young composers to concentrate their attention on folk-music was to lead them into a *cul de sac* (*Musical Herald*, 1.9.1912:283).

'Truth', according to Bauman, is 'an aspect of the hegemonic form of domination or of a bid for domination-through-hegemony' (1991:232). In common with many another doctrine, Sharp's exposition of the nature and application of folk-song required its adherents to accept certain underlying legislated principles - his *a priori* assumptions - as self-evidently 'true'. Critics such as Newman rejected Sharp's doctrine on the basis that these same fundamentals were unable to bear close scrutiny. Both Sharp and Newman believed they had acquitted themselves well in this discussion, and each position had its own supporters.

By the time of this altercation, Sharp's followers were established in the popular imagination as the folk-song 'cult'. In *Chapter 9*, we will examine the process whereby folk-dance was similarly brought within the bounds

of Sharp's legislative authority.

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Chapter 9: THE 'CULT' ESTABLISHED

Folk dance, as well as song, had been investigated by Frank Kidson and other late Victorian antiquarians. This chapter introduces Mary Neal, who pioneered the application of the folk-dance as a recreational activity. We also examine the process whereby Cecil Sharp - motivated by overriding concern for the national interest - wrested control of the folk-dance movement from his erstwhile associate, thereby bringing it within the bounds of his legislative authority.

The notion of 'the expert' is central to this chapter. Acting to maintain and perfect the social order, the legislator is, above all, an 'expert' whose 'authoritative statements' are legitimated on the basis of their supposedly 'superior' and 'objective' knowledge (Bauman, 1987:4,5).

Although Kidson was always careful to call himself a 'collector' rather than an 'expert' (*Manchester Guardian*, 16.11.1926), residual expert status ensured his continued participation in folk-art competition and caused both parties to the folk-dance dispute to seek his endorsement. But Sharp's new legislation took discourse into realms where Kidson would not follow ...

> *It is evident that the cult of folk-songs is interesting ever-widening circles, and it even bids fair to become a social fashion, with a pose and the usual undiscriminating admiration* (*Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:806)

Up until the end of the last century, noted the *Musical Times* in 1912, there had been some 'laudable efforts' to collect folk-song. But these had been undertaken - as, no doubt, Kidson would have been happy to confirm - 'more with a belief in its antiquarian interest than with an idea that discoveries would be of general utility or of any particular artistic importance'. But now 'the cult of folk-music in England' had developed as 'one of the more remarkable enthusiasms of modern times' (01.10.1912:639).

At its centre was Cecil Sharp, the self-appointed spokesman of the folk-song movement. Yet as far as the Folk-Song Society was concerned, he found that 'his work was inevitably beyond its bounds. It took its own direction, and remains, in its results, as a lasting and valued possession of the nation' (Keel, 1948:114).

In Sharp's obituary, The *Musical Times* suggested that for the collectors who preceded him, 'the salvage and study of folk-song was more or less a hobby'. But for Sharp it was 'a passion' to which 'everything else took second place' (01.08.1924).

By 1905, he had 'become so devoted to the cult' that he resolved to give up all other work to spend his time in 'collecting, editing, and disseminating the songs and dances', and now 'personified' the 'folk-song enthusiast'

(*Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:806). In 1911 he would be awarded a 'practical if inadequate' pension from the Government of £100 per annum in recognition of his work (01.10.1912:640).

After the publication of *English Folk-Song*, Sharp did little song collecting - in England, at any rate - turning his attention instead to the dance, 'a domain where he had no serious Establishment rivals to contend with' (Harker, 1982:59; Boyes, 1993:76). Sharp had realised that this folk-art, described by his associate H.C. MacIlwaine as 'an inheritance, needed but unknown, and long mislaid', was an equally viable instrument in furthering the aims of

> the national movement that is going on in every part of our life towards a return to purely English art and customs, and a turning away from others borrowed abroad, and not truly representative of the national spirit (*Musical Times*, 01.12.1906:805).

The Folk-Dance Movement

In June 1910 the *Musical Times* reported on the 'rather bewildering' discussion which had been conducted in the press in relation to what constituted the proper form of Morris-dancing; a 'saltatory[1] exercise' which 'bids fair to rival the attractions of rinking and the cinematograph'.

On one side was Sharp, who, 'by his investigations and persevering propaganda', had made himself 'an expert' on the subject. He had taught the dances to the girls of the Espérance Club, but, finding fault with their subsequent departure from 'traditional forms' of the dance, severed

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[1] 'leaping' or 'jumping' (Chambers, 1993:1521).

contact with that organisation.

On the other side was Mary Neal, the head of the Club. Although her introduction to the dance had been from the 'expert' against whom she now rebelled, Miss Neal was 'afraid of the hindering touch of the pedant'. She did not believe in the 'expert', and considered that 'any average person of intelligence can collect a Morris-dance' (*Musical Times*, 01.06.1910:365).

This account, however, distorts significant details. Fox Strangways makes clear that when Neal contacted Sharp with a view to learning folk-songs, he had referred her to William Kimber when she mentioned dances to go with them. Neal went to Oxford to see Kimber, and he and his cousin agreed to travel to London to teach her girls (1933:69-70; Judge, 1989:550). Neal adds that this took place in 1905, by which time the revived Headington side had again disbanded. Her girls had already learnt the Scotch dances 'direct from two Scotchmen' and the Irish dances from 'an Irish lady', so they were 'quite ready to learn the English dances in the same way' (Neal, 1915:161).

We can easily imagine the 'iconoclast amongst the graveyard school of musicians', whose 'buoyant spirit' rebelled against 'hobble-skirted and quaker-bonneted women', as the *Musical Herald* would later depict her (01.04.1913:103). It will be recalled that Sharp had not known what to do with his 'discovery', but once someone else had taken the initiative he was concerned not to relinquish control of it.

Mary Neal and the Espérance Club

Mary Neal, Sharp's junior by some six months, was born, as Clara Sophia Neal, into a 'materially well-off' family of Birmingham button manufacturers in June 1860. Growing up both stifled by what she would later describe as the hypocrisy of Victorian middle class life, and concerned about social distress, Neal joined a group of 'devout and educated' women known as the 'Sisters of the People' in February 1888. This was part of the West London Mission established by the Wesleyan Methodists, which Clara Sophia entered as Sister Mary.

Mary Neal's duties included the maintenance of a Registry for women needing work, and the running of a 'Club for Working Girls'. In 1891 Emmeline Pethick joined the Sisterhood, and assisted Neal in her Club work. Some four years later, the pair broke away from the West London Mission to set up their own Espérance Girls' Club.

In response to the working conditions and lack of opportunities which prevailed in that area, Neal and Pethick began a tailoring business under the name of *Maison Espérance*, which advertised 'an eight-hour day, a living wage, and a good well-ventilated workroom'. The two women were 'inspired by a high idealism', and 'deeply involved as conscientious social workers'.

Pethick married in 1901, and was replaced as musical director of the Espérance Club by Herbert MacIlwaine. MacIlwaine happened to read Sharp's interview on the subject of English folk song which appeared in the *Morning*

Post on 29th. July 1905. He subsequently mentioned it to Neal, who first visited Sharp shortly after (Judge, 1989:546-9).

For some two years Sharp 'remained a faithful supporter of the movement' (1989:552), providing introductory lectures on folk-song at Espérance performances. Because these featured freshly collected songs and dances, 'presented positively as the direct and transforming restoration of a lost heritage', Judge feels that Sharp and Neal at this stage complemented each other:

> The visions of Sharp, the musical educationalist, especially conscious of the origins of the material, coincided with those of Mary Neal, the devoted club worker, particularly aware of what all this seemed to promise for her girls. Both of these wanted to use these songs and dances, not simply as a nostalgic entertainment, but as an instrument for good (1989:551).

As 'a born organiser and publicist', Neal's promotion of the movement was acknowledged in the first edition [1907] of Sharp and MacIlwaine's *Morris Book*. Sharp's role at this stage was principally that of musician and historical scholar, whilst MacIlwaine was responsible for notation of the dance movements. But this 'peaceful co-operation' would continue only as long as the folk-song movement remained Sharp's principal interest (1989:551-3).

Espérance demonstrations were given all over the country. One such, at Ilkley, entitled 'An Evening in Merrie England', was reported in the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*. The Espérance girls were accompanied by both Neal and MacIlwaine, and '[i]t was hoped that the bringing down of the London contingent, as an object lesson in what might be

done, would have value in arousing enthusiasm for the cause' (07.11.1908). Neal appealed both 'widely and successfully' for funds to support what was rapidly becoming a national movement with considerable popular appeal.

Even as late as 1908, Sharp's knowledge of the morris could fairly be described as 'limited' (Judge, 1989:555). Yet he took steps to rectify this situation in the summer of that year, undertaking what Judge describes as his 'first major piece of collecting' without MacIlwaine. In a letter to Kidson (12.07.1908), Sharp mentioned having spent recent weekends in Derbyshire, where he claimed to have discovered and noted down 'some very interesting morris dances of a new type'.

Within a matter of weeks, Sharp 'was confident in his mastery of the material and fully prepared to lay down the law about it'. He resented what he interpreted as the Espérance Society's pretensions to having originated the folk-song and dance movement, and at the same time 'was becoming very conscious that his own roles as an expert and as the original collector were in some danger' (Judge, 1989:555-6). On 7th. March 1909, Sharp wrote to Neal to inform her that she could no longer expect his support if she also 'wish[ed] to pose as an expert and authority' ([*quoted in*] 1989:556-7).

Although the *Musical Times* (01.06.1908:373) had commented on the 'wonderful precision and accuracy' displayed by the girls under Neal's 'able direction', Sharp

had become 'dissatisfied' with their standard of dancing and teaching, and now claimed 'no official connexion' with the Espérance Club. Not surprisingly, this 'difference in outlook' produced a 'certain amount of friction', and provided the ostensible reason for Sharp's recourse to the press. He wrote to the *Morning Post* (01.04.1910) to criticise the methods of what had in the previous month become the Espérance Guild of Morris Dancers; an organisation to which, in the words of their brochure, 'all men and women of good will who wish to see a fairer and happier life for the people of England shall belong'. In his letter, Sharp hoped merely that they would 'allow their enthusiasm to be guided by those who possess the requisite experience and knowledge' (Fox Strangways, 1933:74,76,81; Judge, 1989:553-6).

Sharp believed that if folk-dance was to be revived amongst the 'lettered classes', it was essential that they should be taught 'the survivals of genuine and unbroken tradition' by none other than 'accredited instructors,' acting under the overall direction of 'the expert' ([*quoted in*] 1933:81).

In an interview with the same newspaper on 5th. May 1910, Mary Neal commented that the word 'expert' lay at the basis of their difficulties. As far as she was concerned, she recognised no 'experts' in morris dancing but those who had been taught directly by the traditional dancer, and '[i]n this sense, therefore, the teachers sent out by the Espérance Club are expert teachers'. She thought it was as

unreasonable to talk about an expert in morris dancing as 'an expert in making people happy', and revealed that whilst Sharp had at first worked 'very amicably' with her club, she had 'always expected what has happened' ([*quoted in*] 1933:82). Neal would later claim that she and Sharp had been working on 'entirely separate lines' since 1907 (1915:165).

In the following month's *Vanity Fair* (June 1910), Francis Toye commented that

> I can see no reason why Mr. Sharp should arrogate himself the position of Pope in these matters. And in his letters to the Press that is just what he has done. He has excommunicated Miss Neal and the Espérance Club asserting that their steps are incorrect and their movements untraditional ([*quoted in*] Judge, 1989:564).

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<u>Stratford-upon-Avon</u>

On 5th. August 1910, the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* advertised a *Folk Festival of Song and Dance*, to be held in the Memorial Theatre on the following Wednesday. Dance Competitions would be held in the morning, followed by a Display of Folk Singing and Dancing in the afternoon.

Folk-song and dance held a particular appeal for teachers. The *Musical Times* (01.17.1909:446) had, for instance, reported on a competition held at Portsmouth Town Hall on 12th. June 1909, where all 150 entrants were teachers from the elementary schools of West Sussex and Hampshire. Now, in order to popularise the dance and song 'which contributed so much to the joyousness of rural life in the years that have passed', a number of teachers had

been in Stratford for the previous few weeks. Classes in folk dancing had been held in the Parish Parlour, designed to 'spread a knowledge of some of the essentials considered to be requisite to restore the country to the condition of the 'merrie England' of old'.

Stratford had become the headquarters of the Espérance Guild of Morris Dancers, and the *Herald* of 12th. August noted that Miss Neal had been 'amongst us for some time working hard to place the organisation on a substantial basis'. Indeed, she was at its very centre:

> Of course, she has important help from other ladies who warmly favour the undertaking, but she is the prime mover, and if the project succeeds the credit must be ascribed to her. She is a lady of great enthusiasm, of unbounded energy, and is capable of interesting others in the work in which she is so ardently engaged (*Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12.08.1910).

Forming part of a wider Festival 'in honour of Shakespeare', the event was well attended, in spite of 'fierce' sunshine outside. Largely composed of 'country and clerical magnates', the Memorial Theatre audience endured six hours of song and dance with 'unaffected pleasure'. Competitors had come from various parts of the country, and a 'large contingent' of Espérance-trained adults from Hull were 'deservedly popular'. Mary Neal's 'vigorous, well-grown' London girls were 'a great surprise' to the *Herald* reviewer, who mused on what 'charm' must be lent to the London streets by 'those slum children'.

At the close, the Rev. F.H. Hodgson noted that the movement had gained a greater following in England over the past year. The Festival organisers were "gratified" to know

that it had spread so rapidly, especially since their object was

> to brighten the lives of children in the towns and rural districts by giving them back some of the old songs and dances which made the England of long ago such a happy, lovable place.

Teachers had been drawn from all parts of England to see and learn the new steps and dances, and he was glad to see "the interest evinced in this cult of folk-music and dancing". Both mental and physical pleasure were to be derived from these songs and dances, "which were in grave danger of being buried in oblivion".

Besides Clive Carey, and Mrs. Tuke of London, Frank Kidson was reported as attending as one of the judges of the Morris dancing display. Although he was introduced as "a great expert in all that affected folklore both in song and dance", no further mention was made of his contribution to the proceedings.

'Experts'

After the prizegiving Mr. A.D. Flower, chairman of the Governors of the Memorial Theatre, had some observations to make on the subject of 'experts'. An unfortunate result of becoming an expert was that one was able to criticise through seeing mistakes and errors. Although he knew nothing of the subject himself, Flower understood there had been some kind of criticism offered, "and some which came from that great expert, Mr. Cecil Sharpe (*sic*), had been, he hoped, misread".

Sharp was present, and would be asked "to dissipate some of the impressions that had got abroad". In a

seemingly conciliatory gesture, Flower concluded by saying that Sharp, Kidson, and Neal were "all companions trying to organise and revive Morris dancing and folk-singing, and they had one great object at heart, to bring more joy into the life of the people".

In the light of Flower's words, it is interesting to consider the degree to which orientation can be imputed by association. Although he had doubtless been invited to attend the Festival on account of his acknowledged "great" expertise "in all that affected folklore both in song and dance", Kidson's participation in the Festival caused Flower to presume that he, in common with his two "companions", favoured an organised revival of both folk-singing and morris dance.

That this was an unwarranted assumption will be seen more clearly in ***Chapters 10*** and ***11***. Suffice to say for the present that Kidson was at least dubious about the first, and thoroughly dismissive of the other. Characteristically, however, he was inclined to let that pass.

In responding to Flower, Sharp said that he was in a "difficult position". He had been told that he belonged to "the unhappy class of people known as 'experts', and it seemed to him that this word was rapidly becoming the most objectionable name they could possibly call a man". But, "for the sake of argument", he would "presume" that he was one. He was glad to see how the festival had grown in its second year, and thought there was no more appropriate place than Stratford to be the centre of "this great

revival" - it was

> the home of the immortal Shakespeare, who was himself the incarnation of all that was happy and beautiful, of all that one associated with the spring and May-time [and] England. Here they were trying to restore to the members of the younger generation that which the older generation were denied, their proper birth-right of the old songs and dances of the country ([*adapted from*] *Musical Times*, 01.09.1910:596; *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12.08.1910).

Sharp said little of a concrete nature in relation to the dispute between himself and Neal, save to mention that it was an "unhappy sign" in any movement "when those who engineered it failed to agree amongst themselves".

He took the opportunity, instead, to outline his own expert credentials. As the audience - he said - already knew, he had collected "a very large number" of songs and dances, which had led him to form a "definite view" of both their "technical character and warranty". Moreover, he felt he incurred a great responsibility in "going to the people" to collect material, and it was his "bounden duty" to ensure that the songs and dances so published were "genuine, unaltered examples of the people's art", performed "in the true traditional manner".

Differences had arisen on this last point, and he had "felt it necessary" to criticise "some of the ways in which certain dances had been danced". Yet all his criticism had been directed with but one aim, which was "to ensure the transference of the songs and dances from one class to another without hurt or harm".

For this last remark, Sharp received a hearty cheer (*Musical Times*, 01.09.1910:596; *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*,

12.08.1910).

The *Musical Times* concluded by saying that the committee were doing their best 'to make the Stratford festivals truly national in character and with more value behind them than mere pageant-like amusements' (01.09.1910).

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Ethel Kidson accompanied her uncle on this trip to Stratford, 'surely the most English place in England' ([?]1926:110-1). They lodged near the Guildhall church, within the sound of its old bells, 'the same that Shakespeare must have heard when he lay dying at New Place' ([?]1926:114-5).

The *Musical Times* report shows that Mrs. Stanton, of Arnscote, had brought some dancers from Honington to the Festival. She also 'produced a folk-singer, an old lady who, though of feeble voice, gave a delightful rendering of *The young and single sailor*, a folk-song she had remembered from her youth' (01.09.1910:596). Her name, we learn from the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, was Mrs. Mary Steele, of Shipston-on-Stour, whose 'quaint and pretty song' won 'great applause'. In spite of her advanced age, 'she gave the tale of disinterested love charmingly and tunefully' (12.08.1910).

'Uncle was judging the folk songs sung by the country people', wrote Ethel, and her brief account of the visit almost entirely concerns this one particular singer:

I remember one old woman who came forward in her simple country best clothes wearing a strapless apron and a bonnet ... She came forward and made an old fashioned curtsey and then her bonnet yawned, and she kept setting it to rights, I thought if anyone laughs at her I shall cry. But although the theatre contained many children she was received with the greatest courtesy ([?]1926:111-3).

Despite her struggles with the bonnet, the old woman managed to sing her song, which Ethel thought to be a version of *Young Phoebe and her dark eyed sailor*, 'in a sweet old voice'. To Ethel, 'this old woman made the sweetest and most touching sight I have ever seen on the stage', and the air of her song seemed the 'very finest' she had ever heard. 'Uncle awarded her the prize and she curtsey[ed] and took it with a little [*illegible*] in her faded old blue eyes, very charming to see' ([?]1926:114).

The competitive aspect of this folk-song recital went unrecorded by the press, as did Kidson's participation in it as judge. In the wake of *English Folk-Song* - a legislative tract which even sixty years later would, for A.L. Lloyd, remain 'a solitary beacon and a towering one' (1967:5) - there seemed nothing more to be said on that subject. Sharp had now succeeded in turning 'folk' discourse firmly away from song towards dance.

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> *It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Study in Scarlet* [1887]: Conan Doyle, 1929:69).

Perhaps Kidson himself did not attend the Stratford Festival with the same lightness of heart which had been betrayed by his niece. He had written to Sharp, presumably

in response to a now lost letter, to inform him that

> I have no wish to enter into or be quoted in connection with your controversy with Miss Neal. I am not a partizan on either side. I really know nothing of Miss Neal.
> She called on me a little while ago & we had a few minutes casual conversation on the subject of morris dancing. I have had no inkling that she is quoting (rightly or wrongly) any thing I said in support of her side of the question & I cannot wholly recall the conversation.
> My own personal belief is that we really know very little what the early morris dancing was like but I think it is pretty evident that the Morris dancing that survives today is not an exact reflex of what was popular say in Shakespeare's time. Like all traditionary things it is subject to the law of change that governs tradition generally & as such it is difficult to pin down anything. The Morris dance & kindred ceremonies appear to differ in different parts of the country.
> I have been asked to act with others at Stratford as judge & I shall do my best to fulfil the position with fairness & impartiality.
> I go there tomorrow for that purpose & to judge the Folk Songs (08.08.1910).

Whatever his feelings about this 'controversy', Kidson appears to have taken the opportunity to do some research for his projected revised edition of *British Music Publishers* whilst in Stratford. An undated sheet of notes, in Kidson's hand, and now to be found in the Mitchell Library interleaved copy, bears the heading of the Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon.

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Hodgson said that he could not conclude the proceedings without referring to "that good lady behind the scenes, pulling the strings, their kind friend, Miss Neal" (*Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12.08.1910). The following year, the strings would have a different hand on them.

The 'authentic' tradition?

Sharp had 'drawn markedly ahead' of Neal, in terms of the repertoire available to him, during the summer of 1910. One of his 'discoveries' was the Kirby Malzeard sword dance (Judge, 1989:567). Sharp lectured in Leeds in late December of that year, and seems to have enquired of Kidson whether he knew of any other places where they could be found. Kidson informed him that there may be other places where the dance survived, although he did not know them. He also added, perhaps in order to deflate Sharp, that '[t]he Kirby Malzeard dancers are pretty well known in Yorkshire' (letter, 29.12.1910). Mary Neal would similarly travel to Yorkshire in the autumn of the following year, for the purpose of investigating the Flamborough Sword Dancers (Judge, 1989:568).

At the end of 1910 Neal and a number of associates went to Headington with the purpose of investigating William Kimber's credentials as a 'traditional' dancer. The object of this expedition was to show that since Kimber's 'tradition' could be questioned, Sharp's knowledge of the morris, as obtained from Kimber, was not the knowledge of the 'expert' (Fox Strangways, 1933:83-4). Neal informed Archibald Fowler that

> We have indubitably proved that the whole basis of Mr. Sharp's contentions as *an expert* are entirely unfounded ... It is all extremely funny from our point of view, after the fuss he has made about expert knowledge (letter, 25.10.1910, [*quoted in*] Judge, 1989:565).

Sharp could with some justification be accused of a certain over-reliance on Kimber: through founding his

approach to the morris on the latter's knowledge, Sharp inevitably dismissed anything which failed to conform to Kimber's model as 'decadent, revived, or invented' (Judge, 1989:578). At the same time, Kimber's credentials seemed impressive. Family involvement ensured that he had grown up with the dances and tunes, and, although it would be curtailed by his team's decision to withdraw from that activity, Kimber's career as a public performer had begun in 1887 at the age of fifteen. Chandler considers it likely that four generations of Kimbers had danced for Headington; and if Kimber's own claims are to be believed, a line of family dancers could be traced back to 'the middle decades of the eighteenth century' (1993:123,135,151,156,187).

In some concern, Sharp was obliged to contact Kimber, who - after first consulting his father, whose own participation had spanned the twenty consecutive years up to 1887 (Chandler, 1993:153) - felt able to offer reassurance. Sharp must have been greatly relieved to read that 'the way I have taught you ... is right' (letter 10.11.1910, [*quoted in*] Judge, 1989:566).

An article in *Practical Teacher* from March 1910 indicates that Neal may well have been dubious about even the possibility of being an 'expert' on the morris dance. Her own investigations were said to have shown that there were 'no set steps to any morris, for the same performers introduced several variations, apparently without knowing it, into the most common dances'. Even the state of the weather or their feelings, could, she believed, make the

steps 'more simple or more complicated' ([*quoted in*] 1989:562).

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In October 1911, the *Musical Times* noted the continued spread of the movement for the preservation and revival of the use of folk-songs and dances. Books, lectures, and public demonstrations had created 'widespread and increasing interest' in the subject. But a new problem had arisen in the wake of this activity:

> The effective dissemination ... of the material recovered by collectors, in a way which shall have permanent results, is a task of great difficulty. It involves nothing less than the transference of the products of a primitive art from the unlettered peasants who created it, to the rest of the nation ... (01.10.1911:651).

Whereas a 'competent' musician could take down and teach a song without difficulty, the situation in relation to the dances was different. Here, a 'new technique' had first to be acquired, and then passed on to others. Indeed, '[s]o far as this generation is concerned a new art had to be learned'. It became 'obvious' to Sharp that the dissemination of the dances on a large scale was only possible through the training of teachers (01.10.1912:640).

Because of these considerations, mainly deriving from his 'irritation' that the revival of the dances under Neal's direction was 'getting artistically on to wrong lines', Sharp had become associated in 1909 with Miss Dorette Wilkie, head of the Chelsea Physical Training College. As Director of the School of Morris Dancing, Sharp now had his own power base in the wider folk-dance

movement, which thereby received both a 'central home' and a 'fresh impetus'. Folk-dance was adopted as part of the regular curriculum of the College, and the scheme provided for the careful and systematic training, examination and certification of teachers. Above all, the school was to 'conserve the Morris in its purity and teach it accurately', whilst preventing the dances being practised in ways 'not sanctioned by tradition' (Fox Strangways, 1933:76-8; *Musical Times*, 01.10.1911:654; 01.10.1912:640).

Sharp crowed to Neal in the following vein:

> In the administration of your society you deliberately isolated yourself from and refused to associate yourself with those who were better acquainted with the subject than yourself and animated by higher artistic ideals than your own. Seeing the danger I very naturally took steps to avert it with the result that I now have a staff of teachers at my command [who] in my opinion are far better qualified to spread the Morris than are the members of your Club (letter, 26.07.1909, [*quoted in*] Judge, 1989:559).

Although, shortly after this letter had been written, the Board of Education had recommended the introduction of folk-dance into both elementary and secondary schools - credited by Keel (1948:120) to Sharp's lobbying - they had done 'little or nothing' to supply teachers with the required technical knowledge. There was plenty of enthusiasm, but it needed to be guided into 'the right channel', so that the dances could be 'launched and disseminated in their best, purest and most traditional forms'.

The 'difficulty' now was to devise a scheme, 'based upon sound artistic and educational principles', which

would prove sufficiently attractive to those serving teachers who 'had felt the beauty and realised the educational value of our national music', and were prepared to devote part of their summer holiday to the study of the subject (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1911:651,654).

Sharp takes Stratford

Sharp had become Director of the Stratford Festival, which provided the ideal vehicle - particularly since he had been obliged to confess to Flower in October 1910 that, at that time, 'he had not got an organisation' (Judge, 1989:566). Acknowledged as the 'greatest authority' on both folk-dance and song, Sharp was assisted by a staff of six teachers, drawn from an entirely different social *milieu* to Neal's girls. The Misses Kennedy, Wilkinson, Walsh, and Maud and Helen Karpeles were all trained dancers, and held the teachers' certificate of the Chelsea Physical Training College. Mattie Kay, Sharp's singer, completed the roster (01.10.1911:651; 01.09.1912:602).

Mary Neal had started the first vacation school at Littlehampton in Sussex, but transferred it to Stratford at the request of the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. This body had been placed in the position of having to decide whether Neal or Sharp should be recognised as representing the folk-dance movement. Sharp met them *in camera* in early 1911, whilst Neal was on a lecture tour in America: ironically, the Stratford Theatre was one of the organisations she was promoting there. On her return, and finding that she no longer had the whole-hearted support of

the Governors, Neal resigned her position as Honorary Secretary of the Summer School, pending an imminent Conference to discuss 'the diverse views' on folk-dancing. Sharp was appointed Director of the Folk Dance, and his programme substituted instead. Neal returned to her own school at Littlehampton, convinced of the Stratford Theatre's duplicity (Fox Strangways, 1933:86; *Musical Herald*, 1913:103; Judge, 1989:566,599).

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The 1911 Stratford School lasted for a month, and was attended by over two hundred students. Each student enrolled for one week at least, although some stayed for two, three, or all four. The *Musical Times* review of the Festival includes a detailed students' timetable. Each day would begin at 9 a.m. with a dancing class, followed by the singing and study of folk-songs at 10 a.m.. Each song would first be sung by Mattie Kay, then the whole class would sing it in unison. Each week, some fifty to sixty songs would be got through in this manner.

In the intervals between the songs, Sharp 'explained the function of the folk-song in the elementary school, and gave advice as to the way in which he thought it should be used and taught'. Short discussions would be initiated on related matters, such as whether folk-songs should be performed with or without actions, and 'many aspects of the folk-movement were reviewed and debated' (01.10.1911:651-2).

After the singing class, a demonstration of the dances

that had been taught earlier would be given by members of the staff, their numbers sometimes enhanced by the participation of 'advanced' students. On one occasion William Kimber - ['most lissom of dancers!' (Phillips Barker, 01.02.1911:86)] - performed several Morris jigs so that the students could see what at least purported to be the 'traditional' execution of Morris dance (01.10.1911:652).

The 'expert', it may be noted, had now removed all authority from the 'traditional' performer, whose status had been reduced to that of an exhibit.

Besides practical instruction, students were taught dance notation. A dance would be written out in choreographic notation on the blackboard, and the symbols explained. Then the students would perform it. By this means, the student learnt not only that particular dance, but also how to learn other dances from Sharp and MacIlwaine's book without the aid of a teacher.

Over the four weeks, instruction was given in twenty-six Morris dances and jigs, twenty country dances, three Sword dances, and a number of children's singing games. Women as well as men learnt the Sword dances, so that they would be able to teach the boys in their 'villages and schools' (01.10.1911:652).

Sharp gave lectures each week on both 'English folk-song' and 'English folk-dance', and demonstrated the use of the pipe and tabor. His collection of Morris 'costumes, sticks, swords and other paraphernalia' was on view

throughout the event (01.10.1911:652).

'From time to time', Sharp explained his views on the appropriate use of different types of folk-dance in the school context. For those under the age of twelve, he had decided, the Country dance was most suitable. Older children could profit from learning the Morris - 'the ideal school dance' - because of 'the discipline, the long practice, and close attention to minute technical detail, which its proper performance demanded'. Although it might be 'difficult to persuade' boys to participate in these dances, the Sword dance held evident attractions for them, and had already been adopted in public schools, training ships and the Boy Scouts (01.10.1911:653).

The inherent significance of Stratford as 'surely the most English place in England' had not escaped Ethel Kidson ([?]1926:110-1), and this feature was capitalised on by the organisers of the 1911 Festival. The weekly fee of £1 12*s.* 6*d.* included tickets for seven Shakespeare plays at the Memorial Theatre (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1911:653). The anonymous but highly sympathetic writer of this *Musical Times* article made the most of the connection:

> To propagate ... a knowledge and understanding of the Shakespearean drama is to nourish and quicken the spirit of nationalism, to stimulate the growth of a pure and wholesome patriotism. Shakespeare is called our greatest national poet because, in a higher degree than anyone else, he was the spokesman of our race - the mouthpiece, as it were, of the English folk, in the wider sense of that word (01.10.1911:654).

And this was the link between the two educational movements, both of 'the highest national significance', and

both 'moving on parallel lines towards the same goal', which were now 'associated with' Stratford:

> For the folk-art of a country, whatever its artistic merits or demerits, is the sincere expression of a community, the embodiment, in terms of literature, dance, or song, of national ideals and aspirations. Indeed, in the nature of things, an intimate and abiding relationship must always exist between the conscious, intentioned works of the really great, individual artist, and the un-selfconscious output of the people from which he sprang (01.10.1911:654).

Although he now had control of the vacation school at Stratford-on-Avon, Sharp felt a wider organisation, with branches in the chief provincial centres, but still firmly under his own direction, was now necessary. A meeting to establish such a Society was held at St. Andrew's Hall in London on December 6, 1911, and the resolution moved by Sharp himself. Although the object of the new English Folk-Dance Society was 'to disseminate a knowledge of English folk-dances, singing games, and folk-songs, and to encourage the practice of them in their traditional forms' ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.10.1912:640-1), Winifred Shuldham Shaw later wrote that the 'chief aim' had been 'to preserve intact the tradition by directly controlling the dances, in order to safeguard them from inaccuracies and subsequent corruption' (1921:8): perhaps not quite the same thing. At the meeting, Sharp explained that

> ... the process of transferring the people's art to another class, many of whom held a different point of view, was fraught with danger on every side from those who were not attached to the pure ideal of folk-dance in its traditional form, and for this reason there was a demand for an organised Society that should embody this ideal (01.01.1912:39).

Now securely established as Sharp's fiefdom, the first general meeting of the new Society was to be held at the Stratford-on-Avon Summer School (01.01.1912:39).

The syllabus of the 1912 Festival assured prospective students that the teaching was entrusted only to those who had been 'specially trained in the art of class-teaching', and possessed a 'thorough knowledge' of the way in which folk-songs and dances were performed by 'the best traditional exponents' ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.08.1912).

A visitor found that over a hundred students, 'chiefly school-teachers', had attended in the first week, and remarked on 'the note of joy and exhilaration that seemed to permeate every one concerned'. Of the morning unison folk-singing session, it was recorded that

> there was no distraction as to voice-production and registers, and even no worry as to clear articulation, but in a free and easy, jovial fashion all voices, men and women (who greatly preponderated) sang the melodies and the words (01.09.1912:602).

So much, we might note, for accuracy in transmission. Even the presumably sympathetic visitor to the school thought that if the students could be taught to read fluently from notation, and undertake a technical study of the tonal and rhythmical construction of the tunes, they would be 'safer and better teachers' (01.09.1912:602).

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On 13th. August the long-delayed Conference was held in the Memorial Lecture Room. It had been organised by the Governors of the Memorial Theatre, who were 'naturally

anxious' that the standard set, both in classes and demonstrations, should be 'in harmony with the best traditions'. Many interested parties attended, including Arthur Somervell, who said that he knew "very little about the subject and came as a learner". Archie Fowler, the Chairman, opined that short of going straight to the 'Folk' who danced them, the only way to proceed was to secure instruction from 'experts' who had collected and studied the dances, and bring students and experts together in one centre. But how, he wondered, could an acceptable standard be established?

The Espérance Club, in re-creating "the spirit that has been crushed by industrialism", was criticised for looking more to the "recreative" than to the "national aspect" which was felt to more accurately characterise Sharp's approach.

Sharp himself, who was 'greatly applauded', said that the 'artistic' aspect of the movement was the most important. He and his colleagues were "first collectors and then disseminators". In this respect they were in the position of trustees engaged in "a task of enormous difficulty, a task requiring at every stage the help of all those who were imbued with the idea that the things being passed on were arts". In teaching, it was necessary to imbue those being taught with the beauty and love of the art, and teach it accurately. Once folk-song and dance had been established as arts, and practised by the whole nation and not just by a part of the community, "the main

difficulties would be overcome".

In an attempt to draw the two leaders together "at the shrine of the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race", the actor F.R. Benson suggested that they had to "feel their way between the Scylla of academic perfection and the Charybdis of the untutored joy of the savage". After all, "they were all working for a happier, merrier, saner, and a stronger England".

Rev. Hodgson proposed that a National Board of Folk-Song and Dance should be formed, with both Sharp and Neal on the directorate. Miss Neal said that she was prepared to assist in putting such a scheme into practice, but took no other part in the discussion (*Musical Times*, 01.09.1912).

Vaughan Williams, a member of the interim committee of the English Folk-Dance Society (*Musical Times*, 01.01.1912:39), commented that if they kept entirely to tradition - by which he presumably meant what Sharp decreed as such - they could be quite sure that what they taught was "spontaneous and sincere". Sharp stood up again to say that some present seemed to feel that so long as "joy and pleasure" were derived from dancing, the artistic side represented by accuracy did not matter very much. But to the artist, accuracy was "essential in every detail"; without it, his art would "perish".

Although 'nothing very definite' came of the Conference, it was agreed that the training of teachers must be 'accurate', and 'Mr. Sharp's firm attitude was therefore accepted as the only rational one' (01.09.1912).

> *Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past* (George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1954:199), [*quoted in*] Cannadine, 1987:191).

The Espérance Club continued to function, with the Littlehampton school of 1913 additionally featuring black American and French Canadian traditional activities (*Musical Herald*, 01.04.1913). The Club 'lapsed' during the War, and was not subsequently revived. By this time,

> Cecil Sharp's complete success and Mary Neal's withdrawal from the scene seemed to be justified by the apparent virtues of the former and the assumed errors of the latter (Judge, 1989:545).

MacIlwaine died in 1916, and, although he had parted company with her in 1909 over her commitment to Women's Suffrage, at the end of the War Neal adopted his son (Judge, 1989:558,574-5). She would later become a Sussex magistrate, 'exert[ing] herself to uphold the cause of Labour' (Fox Strangways, 1933:69,91). Yet she had never, in the folk-dance world, been able to escape Sharp's shadow, which loomed large in the Conclusion of her contribution to *English Folk-Dance*:

> What, then, is the natural way for these ever-changing, ever-evolving dances to be passed on? I unhesitatingly say that they should be learnt from the traditional dancer and passed on in the same way. The written instructions are only useful as a reminder of steps and evolutions, and should never be made an unalterable and fixed standard. For if folk-dancing has been evolving through all these countless generations, who shall fix the exact moment when evolution ceased and the steps and evolutions became fixed and unalterable? ... Nothing is less to be desired than that any school or any individual should take possession of this national treasure (1915:170,173).

But control of the revival was now firmly in Sharp's hands.

'Private information' is cited as the source of an interesting conclusion to this part of the story. In 1925 a presentation was made to Neal, on behalf of 'a group of some eighty friends and admirers', which contained 'an impressive collection of differing people'. Included amongst their names were Neville Lytton, Lucy Broadwood, Conrad Noel, Waldron Smithers, Edward Carpenter, John Graham, and his friend Frank Kidson (Judge, 1989:576,590 [*footnote* 199]).

In response to my request for further information, Roy Judge (letter, 07.08.1996) kindly sent a photocopy of an extract from the *Musical News and Herald*, dated 21st. March, 1925.[2]

Under the heading *Pioneer of Morris Dancing*, the article revealed that Neal was to be given an album, inscribed with the signatures of 'many friends', together with a note case containing a hundred pounds. The award appears to have been arranged by Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, 'on hearing that Miss Neal was contemplating a voyage for her health'.

The address read as follows:

> You have lived in the life of your time and have woven your ideals and your creative work into the fabric of the national community. Your work has been the expression of your spirit; it has been done by the inspiration of your desire and will, so that its success has been in a true sense its own reward, and you have been content to forgo both financial and public recognition [*my emphasis*].

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[2] It had been passed to him by Chris Bearman, who discovered the cutting in the Broadwood Collection at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. I mention this at Roy Judge's request.

The writer of the article agreed that 'the extent of her labours is apt to be forgotten', and suggested that without Neal's practical teaching and public demonstration, 'the Morris Dance Movement would have had a struggle' (21.03.1925).

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The postmodern era is that in which the re-evaluation of modernity occurs - when the 'imputed intentions' and 'ascribed consequences' of the project of modernity become transparent (Bauman, 1992:115). Although this account of the origins and development of the folk-dance movement has been presented in the form of conventional historical narrative, it may be reviewed as an element of the modern project.

Since the overriding concern of modernity is man-made order, the reappearance of folk-dance as an unregulated activity outside the bounds of legislated culture necessitated its incorporation within it. Once its presence became evident, wild culture had to be brought into the garden, to be revived and relocated in a different cultural context as part of an invented but selective tradition.

Whilst the late twentieth century reader might well sympathise with Neal's beliefs concerning the nature of folk-dance, it was an imperative for the modern project that her authority should be both curtailed and marginalised. Through her refusal to accept both the determining role of the 'expert' and his - or indeed any - fixed standard, she not only perpetuated disorder: because

that left-over which escapes the legislator's definition of order is necessarily chaos, she actively promoted it.

Moreover, whilst Neal's influence had once been restricted to the girls of the Espérance Club, the preponderance of teachers at her Stratford Festival meant that it had come to extend throughout the legislator's natural domain of the educational system.

Mass education had been designed to enforce cultural homogeneity (Bauman, 1991:64), and it is evident that Neal could not be allowed to remain in control of the Stratford summer school. A national standard had to be imposed. If, as Kimber had assured Sharp, his adopted standard was indeed the correct one, it had - at least, according to Sharp's professed belief - the considerable additional advantage of the national spirit incorporated within it.

The Autocrat

> *It is in this bringing of the folk-song and dance back to the people that the greatness of Sharp's achievement lies* (*Musical Times*, 01.18.1924).
>
> *What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence ... The question is, what can you make people believe that you have done* (**Sherlock Holmes** [in] *A Study in Scarlet* [1887]: Conan Doyle, 1929:133).

If 'pioneer' is characteristically used to describe Kidson, the word most often encountered in relation to Sharp is 'autocrat'. We briefly consider Sharp's character, focusing on his perceived autocratic tendencies.

Sharp's biographer - who shared with his subject 'that serenity ... which is born of conviction and single-mindedness' (Karpeles, 1939:348) - wrote that he talked 'like an iconoclast' and acted 'like an autocrat'. Indeed, Sharp was fully convinced that 'they ought to be ruled for their good by those whose business it was to do it'. In consequence, when he formed his folk-dance Society, 'there were no divisions in the camp' (Fox Strangways, 1924:295).

That is, of course, amongst those who were prepared to be dictated to and still remained in the 'camp'. From Boyes' perspective, Sharp's 'autocratic personality' had been less of a unifying force than 'a significant factor in promoting dissention' (1993:77).

He had, after all, fallen out with almost everyone he had been involved with. As parties to disputes with Sharp, we might list almost at random his partners at the Adelaide College of Music (Anderson, 1994:633); Mary Neal; his employers at the Hampstead Conservatoire; the Folk-Song

Society; and, despite the effort expended in their cultivation, 'the musical and educational establishments at their highest levels' (Boyes, 1993:74; Cox, 1990:94-5; 1993:144-6).

Even his seventeen years' friendship with Marson had ended, in November 1906, because of 'a well-intentioned but indiscreet move on Sharp's part' (Fox Strangways, 1924:31-2). By letter, Sharp told Marson that

> There have, probably, been mistakes on both sides: our tempers are too individual and autocratic for us to run smoothly in harness (09.11.06 [*quoted in*] 1924:32) [*my emphasis*].

This letter seems to indicate that Sharp recognised, and was perhaps comfortable with, this aspect of his character. We have already seen how Francis Toye described Sharp as a self-appointed Pope in the pages of *Vanity Fair* (June 1910); Sharp also adopted this description, 'presumably in jest', himself (Judge, 1989:586 [*footnote* 119]); [*see also*] Cox, 1993:159).

Although he went to Marson's funeral in 1914, Sharp never saw his erstwhile friend alive again (Fox Strangways, 1924:32).

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> *The folk-dance revival was to all intents and purposes a one-man show ...* (Fox Strangways, 1933:196).
>
> *To learn and exactly replicate the songs and dances collected by Cecil Sharp, in precisely the forms published by Cecil Sharp, following minutely the styles decreed by Cecil Sharp, became the essence of the English Folk Dance Society's activity* (Boyes, 1993:100).

All categorisations pertaining to the pastoral are external impositions. In Sharp's case, a panoptic representation of English traditional culture had been constructed. Ostensibly, his work consisted of collecting materials for national song and dance, putting them in order, and making them accessible to all (*The Times*, 18.05.1925). Effectively, he had legislated who the 'folk' were, what constituted their art, which were their songs and dances, and what they represented.

In consequence - as we might expect - 'his delight in the old that was passing away and his welcome of the new that was only just coming into sight were in curiously interesting equipoise' (Fox Strangways, 1924:293-4). Sharp's 'folk' arts had been assigned their place in both.

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Chapter 10: KIDSON AND THE 'CULT'

We saw in the last chapter how Kidson became caught up in the internal wrangling which afflicted the cult. This chapter considers the effect that the development of the cult had on Kidson's own activities.

The growth of interest in both folk-song and dance gave Kidson increased opportunity to promote his knowledge of these matters. At the same time, the expansion of discourse necessarily incurs a change in its nature. Since the 'meaning' of a cultural artefact is imposed rather than inherent, we consider the basis of the different assessments which Kidson and Sharp would make of a song collected in the field.

Kidson offers to assist Sharp in writing *English Folk-Song*, and subsequently reviews the finished work. The 'authoritative statements' which legislators make become 'correct and binding' (Bauman, 1987:4), and Novello's *Folk-Songs of England* series illustrates how Kidson was obliged to come to terms with elements of the legislation which Sharp had enacted.

Kidson desired - although this wish would not be granted - no better epitaph than that he had been 'an Apostle of Tune' (Graham, 1927:48). We review his lecture on *The Vitality of Melody*, and learn of his belief that 'true art' is that which receives popular approval.

Finally we consider the basis of Kidson's opposition to a key element of Sharp's programme - the teaching of folk-song in schools.

Of late years Mr. Cecil Sharp has come to the front as a most ardent and hard-working collector ... (Frank Kidson, *Leeds Mercury*, 21.02.1907).

In placing himself in the front line with other folk-song enthusiasts Mr. Sharp did not claim to have originated the folk-song movement. He fully recognises the admirable pioneer work of the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Miss Lucy Broadwood, Mr. Frank Kidson, and others (*The Musical Times*, 01.10.1912:640).

No-one could reasonably argue with the assertion that Sharp had a talent for song collecting. The air of self-assurance and authority which he characteristically displayed might well provide the key to his success at what he termed 'the lips of peasant singers' (Sharp, 01.01.1907:16).

Sharp outlined his approach in the January 1907 number of the *Musical Times*. By this time he claimed to have already noted down the words and tunes of some twelve hundred songs. As he himself said,

> It is evident that a collection as large as this could not have been made without acquiring some knowledge of the art of unsealing the lips of country folk. A critic once said of me that I combined just that 'pachydermatous spirit and insidious bedside manner' that was required for this particular kind of work. I dare say he was right (01.01.1907:16)[*my emphasis*].

As Sharp saw it, the collector needed to leave behind 'all traces of the conventional drawing-room manner'. Instead, a 'simple and direct' approach was needed 'to unlock the treasures of those who have lived with a similar simplicity and directness' (01.01.1907:16).

Fox Strangways' biography provides a number of illustrations of Sharp's collecting style, often in his own words. Kidson would later satirise the notion that on

arriving in a hitherto unexplored village,

> You had but to treat the oldest inhabitant to a pint of ale, and the floodgates of his memory would open to pour forth a stream of the most ancient song (1915:62:28).

It is interesting therefore to read how Sharp's purchase, for the singer, of a quart of 'zider' in a Somerset village inn bought him a rendition of *John Barleycorn* (Fox Strangways, 1933:34-5), if only to contrast with Kidson's reminiscence of having adopted a similar approach:

> I remember once walking some miles and spending a small fortune in beer at a moorland ale house in the hopes of getting some folk-songs. The rustics silently imbibed the beer, and I went away songless, after several hours of expectancy ((1926:v).

The real irony, of course, lies in the fact that both Sharp and Kidson were themselves teetotal.

Collection and evaluation: what has been 'rescued?'

So commonly used in relation to folk-song in the early years of the twentieth century, the notion of 'rescue from oblivion' had become well established in the popular psyche. It appeared on the title page of John Broadwood's *Old English Songs* in 1843, and had featured in Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* some forty years earlier.

But the collection of a song - in real terms, the appropriation of a cultural artefact - was only the starting point. The find then had to be evaluated; and, as we have seen from Kate Lee's account of her early experiences as a collector, this could itself present many problems. Even if a song was recognised as an old one, an

assessment still had to be made of its likely origins.

We have seen how the Folk-Song Society had recruited Kidson for the specific purpose of vetting the finds of other members, and their *Journal* subsequently provided the opportunity for the more experienced among them to comment on the provenance of each others' discoveries.

We have also seen something of the different styles of assessment made by Kidson and Sharp in the folk-song competitions [***Chapter 7***], and mentioned the scathing comments which Sharp's 'scientific' methods of analysis received in the *Times Literary Supplement* (23.01.1908:26-7) [***Chapter 8***].

But in relation to the evaluation of a song, nothing more characteristically illustrates the difference in approach adopted by Kidson and Sharp respectively than *It's a Rosebud in June*.

It's a Rosebud in June / The Sheep-shearing Ballad

The reader will recall that, under Kidson's adjudication, William King had been awarded first prize at the Folk-Song Competition at Frome in 1904 for this song. Yet when it appeared in the next issue of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (I:v:262-3), the song was credited to Sharp, who had noted it from the same singer, a week before the competition took place, in the parlour of *The Castle of Comfort* on Mendip (Howes, 1969[a]:106).

Along with *High Germany* and *The Lover's Farewell*, this melody would, at Sharp's request, form the basis of von Holst's *Somerset Rhapsody* (1906-7). Holst dedicated the

completed work to Sharp (Holst, 1974:400).

Kidson's annotations in the *Journal* revealed that

> A similar song has been found in print, with the air attached, in *The Merry Musician*, vol. i, 1716, and on half-sheet music of about the same date. The music as printed in the collection referred to, and on the sheets, is by John Barret, and it is highly probable that it was sung on the stage in *The Custom of the Manor*, acted in 1715; a version of the words certainly was introduced in this play, to be sung by country people, and it shows traces of Somersetshire or Devonshire dialect. The air as sung at Frome in 1904 differs considerably from that of Barret, though it is possibly a traditional survival of it. The older version is in the British Museum library, H1601, p. 478.

The text of Barret's song, entitled *The Sheep-shearing Ballad*, was also printed for the purpose of comparison (I:v:262-3).

In supposing King's song to be a 'traditional survival' of Barret's, Kidson's assessment of the song's history was markedly different from that proposed by Sharp, who contended that 'no eighteenth-century tune could be in the Dorian mode'. Although not 'pure' Dorian, Sharp was convinced that Barret's tune had 'enough Dorian traces to preclude eighteenth-century origin'.

Kidson was not persuaded by this argument, and inclined to the belief that the Somerset singers had 'got hold of Barret's air and song and altered it'. He was nevertheless prepared to acknowledge that 'there is evidence equally strong for the other view, *viz.* that Barret adapted an existing traditional song and melody' ([*quoted in*] Howes, 1969[a]:106).

From this altercation, Howes concludes that

> There we have the issue in a nutshell and the solutions offered, certainly with reasons given but ultimately according to the predilections and prejudices (in the strict sense) of the disputants: Kidson had his documents, Sharp his oral tradition, and it was the most natural thing in the world for each to come down in an issue so nicely balanced and lacking in decisive elements, on the side of his own axioms of scholarship (1969[a]:106-7).

The situation is, however, not as straightforward as Howes would have us believe. It is a misrepresentation to suggest that the matter reflected nothing more than a difference of interpretation between two 'scholars'. Sharp's level of scholarly expertise at this stage, unlike Kidson's, could not have been extensive. It has been said that even at the best of times, Sharp's scholarship could most aptly be described as 'shaky' (Watson, 1983:31).

The modal criterion, seemingly so important in the case of *The Sheep-shearing Ballad*, and correctly identified by Harker as 'a lynch-pin of Sharp's musical theory' (1982:59) - it was, after all, the means whereby he had supposedly 'dated' entries in the folk-song competitions at Kendal - was nevertheless one of the first elements to be jettisoned under criticism. The *Times Literary Supplement*'s review of *English Folk Song* would comment on the lack of 'clear exposition' in Sharp's section on this subject, challenging his ability to correctly identify the modes - an analysis which had been used in support of his argument - in Brahms' *Volkslieder* collection (23.01.1908:26-7). In explaining away their sudden decline in importance, Fox Strangways was perhaps more honest than he might have intended to be in writing of Sharp that

> He passed through a stage of having theories about the modes, but soon found, as everyone else does, that investigations of that kind may all be as they please, **or as we like to make them**, and yet leave the root of the matter untouched (1924:294) [*my emphasis*].

Sharp also had what Harker referred to as a 'limited' knowledge of the history of the broadside press. In collecting a set of words from a blind singer which were almost identical to those printed on a seventeenth century broadside [*see* Sharp, 1907:17], the probability that the text had been continuously reprinted over a period of three hundred years 'do[es] not seem to have entered his mind' (Harker, 1982:57; 1985:188).

Yet this omission was surely not by chance. Rather than acknowledging such 'probabilities', Sharp had to actively deny them, since they muddied the otherwise clear waters of his doctrine of communal evolution. Why else would he be so adamant in asserting that 'To search for the originals of folk-songs amongst the printed music of olden days is a mere waste of time' (1907:7-8)?

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> *We all learn by experience, and your lesson this time is that you should never lose sight of the alternative* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *Black Peter* [1904]: Conan Doyle, 1928:716).

Whilst Kidson, in balancing two sides of an equation, could, as we have seen, comfortably accommodate the potential veracity of what he termed 'the other view', Sharp's position had been imposed by his adoption of a model in which the presumed primacy and insularity of oral tradition was inherent. He could not allow the possibility

of print having invariably preceded or interacted with the process of oral transmission, since his theory of communal origin and development would thereby have been undermined.

The historical significance of the ballad sheet in the propagation and reinforcement of song texts has been confirmed by scholarly investigation. Throughout the eighteenth, and well into the nineteenth century, printers and vendors of chap-books and pamphlets, designed to suit the requirements of 'simple unsophisticated readers', carried out business on an extensive scale. An offshoot of this trade were the broadside ballads, which were 'enormously popular until comparatively recent times'.

Some idea of the volume of the trade in popular songs can be discerned by reference to James Catnach, the publisher. After his death in 1841, his sister advertised the business in terms which intimated that 'upwards of 4,000 different sorts of ballads are continually on sale with 40 new penny song books' (Mackerness, 1964:133,138-9).

In contrast to Sharp, Kidson's detailed knowledge of the ballad sheet or broadside made him particularly well qualified to make a judgment on the relationship between broadsides and the oral tradition. Indeed, his knowledge in the field of printed ephemera 'was second to none' (Palmer, 1971:158). So perhaps it was more than coincidental that his article on *The Ballad Sheet and Garland* should appear in the next number of the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* following publication of Sharp's Somerset and North Devon collection.

Kidson noted that 'so large a subject' could be but scantily dealt with' in such a publication as the *Journal*. Although his article 'merely touch[ed] the fringe' of it, he hoped 'at a future time [to] give it better treatment in volume form' (1905:70,78). Like so much else, this promised volume never appeared.

Kidson believed ballad sheets to be of immense value to the folk-song collector, in that they could 'supply us with more or less complete copies of words often imperfectly remembered by old singers' (1905:70). He would later elaborate:

> The folk-song collector cannot ignore the ballad sheet, for upon it are found the words of many folk-songs of which he may only obtain very fragmentary versions from the singer. It is not to be understood that the ballad sheet version of a folk-song is always an accurate one, but it is worth having, for the folk-singer has generally learned his words, or at any rate refreshed his memory, from the broadside copy (1915[a]:85-6).

It should be mentioned that what Palmer referred to as 'recent broadside scholarship' appeared to vindicate Kidson's position. Shortly before his death, the singer Harry Cox was found to possess a large collection of original broadsides, 'from which he and his father had learned their words or refreshed their memories' (Palmer, 1971:158).

Sharp was similarly distrustful of the ballad operas - a subject on which Kidson's researches had 'constituted him our most reliable authority on the subject' (*Choir*, December 1922:238). Kidson was convinced that such works as the *Beggar's Opera* provided 'a capital epitome of tunes

beloved of the English people in the early part of the 18th. century' (1915[b]:575).

But to Sharp, 'scientifically speaking' - that is, in relation to his use of pure modalism as a touchstone of authenticity - they were 'well-nigh worthless' as 'the repositories of tunes' (1907:111-8). Sharp's section on *Old English Songs* in *English Folk-Song* concludes with the comment that

> we must once again warn the student of folk-song not to search for his material amongst the printed and manuscript music of the past ... (1907:118).

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> *Problems may be solved in the study which have baffled all those who have sought a solution by the aid of their senses* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Five Orange Pips* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:116).

The writer of a *Musical Herald* profile of Kidson would report that

> If he can trace the name of the composer, or poet, he gives them due credit. The mystery of so-called communal origin can often be solved by research among early printed matter (01.08.1913:228) [*my emphasis*].

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Consensus or conflict

Before the publication of *English Folk-Song*, Kidson realised that the growing interest in folk-song had brought with it a corresponding lack of rigour in the use of the term. Sharp's projected work now presented the movement with the perfect opportunity for conceptual clarification. In a letter, presumably written in 1907, but dated simply 'Saturday night', Kidson told Sharp that 'the sooner 'Folk

Song' is defined the better'. Indeed, he thought it would 'get to be a very awkward affair soon if no official pronouncement be made', and suggested that Sharp should 'get from several people their definitions of 'Folk Song' & print these in your book'. Kidson's level of concern is reflected in his insistence that the definitions provided by these potential contributors must be able to 'hold water in a legal sense'.

In the collaborative spirit characteristic of the antiquarian, Kidson enclosed his 'own thoughts on the matter' - which Sharp, if he agreed with Kidson's suggestion, was welcome to publish. Kidson opined that 'this view, however worded, will be the same as that of all real folk song collectors'. After all, he continued, 'We all of us know what a folk song is, but it is difficult to express it clearly & to cover all propositions brought against it'.

Since the word 'Song' was used so loosely, Kidson separated it into 'song' and 'melody' for the purpose of definition. A folk melody was an air composed by a 'nonprofessional' musician, which had passed down by oral transmission before getting into print. Folk song came from an equally nonprofessional source, and passed down in a similar manner. It could be unprinted, or may have appeared on broadsides or in garlands printed for a 'non-literary class'.

The essential element of a folk-song or melody was its 'traditionary character'. It must have appealed to 'a

generation or more of people' before it could claim the epithet 'folk''. According to Kidson's criteria, the songs of Burns and others would be excluded, but he was emphatic that it was not an essential of a folk tune that the name of its composer should be unknown.

Kidson assured Sharp that his interpretation of the meaning of folk-song was that 'upon which the Folk Song Society has up to the present worked'. There is, unfortunately, no way of knowing whether Kidson's letter to Lucy Broadwood of 24th. September 1907 preceded or followed his 'Saturday night' letter to Sharp. In this he told her: 'I see Mr. Sharp is bringing out a book on Folk-Song which I have no doubt will contain much original thought whether we agree with it or not'.

Despite Kidson's best efforts to hold the movement together by persuading Sharp to speak for its prominent figures *en bloc*, the *Musical Times*' assessment of *English Folk-Song*, as 'a kind of manifesto of Mr. Sharp's line of thought' (01.10.1912), would be accurate in the strictest sense.

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> *It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Scandal in Bohemia* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:7).

Kidson's review of *English Folk-Song* appeared in the *Musical Times* on 1st. January 1908. Whilst he might well have been disappointed that both his suggestions for and offer of help with the book had been ignored, Kidson's

comments did not betray, but possibly masked it:

> Mr. Sharp's 'conclusions' have certainly not been hastily arrived at, for they bear upon the face of them an assured conviction as to their soundness. Whether all will agree with his deductions is another question, but there is no doubting the fact that they have been well and honestly thought out (01.01.1908).

Boyes suggests that Kidson's assessment 'seems a deliberate irony' in view of the fact that Lucy Broadwood, 'his friend and colleague', had written to the Rev. James Duncan that

> I wish rather that Mr. Sharp had been an older folk-songist before bringing out this book - generalisations, exaggerations, loose statements, hastily written, self contradictory (letter dated 28.11.1907 in Aberdeen University Library Archives [MSS 988/16/28], *[quoted in]* 1993:59 [*footnote* 15]).

Perhaps a consideration of what Kidson wrote later that same year with regard to a new work of Broadwood's will cast an oblique light on his real attitude towards Sharp's work. In reviewing her *English Traditional Songs and Carols* for the *Musical Times*, he drew attention to her 'long standing' association with folk-song. As 'one of the first of that small group of modern collectors who, twenty years ago, recognised that there was 'something in' the native song of the English rustic singer', her contributions to the subject would necessarily show 'that hall-mark of knowledge which so few workers possess'. In short,

> **Miss Broadwood's careful researches and 'level-headed' theories have kept her from that wild domain of vague conjecture, random assertion, and random untruth which is so apt to entrap the enthusiast (01.11.1908:716 [*my emphasis*]).**

> *Never trust to general impressions, my boy, but concentrate yourself upon details* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Case of Identity* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:66).

We might pause for a moment to consider Kidson's admiration for those whom he considered to be true scholars. He would later congratulate Broadwood in the following terms:

> I am very much impressed with the value of this Journal. Your & Miss Gilchrist's notes are most valuable & show a world of research & knowledge of the utmost interest. They must have taken an enormous amount of trouble & reference. I have added a few notes here & there but there is nothing really that I can usefully add for your notes are so full & comprehensive (18.01.1915).

Ethel Kidson confirmed that:

> I should [think] Miss Broadwood and herself [*i.e., Annie Gilchrist*] know more of English Folk Song than anyone living, uncle did not make the great mistake made by so many clever men of underrating the ability of women. He said they could do anything they set their mind to and as antiquarians he had found them scrupulously accurate and with a flair, and instinct for the truth possessed by few men, and surely Miss Broadwood and Miss Gilchrist bear out his contention ([?]1926:99-101).

Such admiration was doubtless reciprocated, and, at least in Broadwood's case, can be confirmed. 'And, speaking of Mr. Kidson, one might be tempted to envy him that fine tribute from [your] fair pen', Gavin Greig wrote to her (letter, 27.11.1907).

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Kidson's review of *English Folk-Song*

An accepted definition of 'folk-song', 'as now understood', had for some time been a desideratum, noted Kidson - as, indeed, he had already told Sharp. 'The song created by the common people' was what Sharp had come up with. Kidson thought that most could agree with the 'spirit' of this definition, but it begged the question of who the 'common people' were. In Sharp's formulation, it was

> those whose mental development has been due, not to any formal system of training or education, but solely to environment, communal association, and direct contact with the ups and downs of life.

But since 'we are all mentally developed by environment and communal association', and all 'have ups and downs in a greater or lesser degree', Kidson thought that a 'compact' definition of folk-song was still needed.

Kidson's main criticism concerned Sharp's insistence on the insularity of the folk tradition, expressed in his unwillingness to accept the possibility of 'garden escapes' from the 'art-world' obtaining 'traditionary life among the 'common people'': since 'it must be admitted that a great number of art-songs which have been individually and personally created, having won the affections of the people have really become 'communal''.

Kidson also took the opportunity to demonstrate his own scholarship *vis-à-vis* Sharp's treatment of early ballad operas and old folk-airs, referring both the author and other readers to his own *Musical Times* article of February

1892, 'where the whole question of *The Vicar of Bray* in relation to the tune *Country Garden* is dealt with' (*Musical Times*, 01.01.1908).

Later that month, Kidson wrote to Sharp to thank him for sending a copy of his fourth Somerset book.

> You of course saw my review in the Musical Times of the 'Conclusions'. I don't know how you would take the sentiments expressed which of course were my own over my own signature. We have a great many 'Conclusions' in common, but you will see I do not quite see point to point with you in all.

He thought that their main difference lay in Sharp's reliance on 'traditional evidence', whereas he favoured 'early printed evidence'. Kidson also believed that if the eighteenth century art musician altered folk melody, the folk song singer would be at least equally likely to alter the art musician's melody and give it a folk song flavour.

But these were 'more or less minor details which can never, practically, be settled', and did not affect 'the great value of the book in its main assessments' (31.01.1908).

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It nevertheless seems certain that Sharp's theories, particularly in relation to the supposed properties of folk-song, had isolated him from his fellow 'experts' to some considerable extent. This contention is demonstrated by reference to the text of a lecture given by Vaughan Williams to the Oxford Folk-Music Society on 16th. November 1910. Even at this time, he found it necessary to explain that

> This theory of folk-music is not, as some people would have us believe, the idiosyncrasy of one English faddist ... ([*quoted in*] *Musical Times*, 01.02.1911:101).

We might similarly consider the closely related question of the inherently English character of folk-song. Whilst this was of fundamental importance to Sharp and his followers, it was, as we have already seen, very much a non-issue to Kidson, save in the matter of historical veracity.

Within his own immediate circle, a similar orientation may be found. Free from an ideology which would continually oblige him to seek out differences, Kidson's correspondent Gavin Greig, resident in rural Aberdeenshire, was able to express the following sentiment to Lucy Broadwood:

> I am so glad you like the tunes I sent you, and that you remark on what I had begun to observe - the close resemblance between your genuine folk-tunes and ours. They are alike because they are the <u>natural</u> utterance of <u>one</u> people (29.11.1907).

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<u>Legislation enacted</u>

Kidson had yet to fully come to terms with the implications of Sharp's legislative programme, however. Agreeing to differ on matters of contention was no longer an option. 'Right' or 'wrong' now prevailed, in accordance with how well a particular issue could be accommodated by Sharp's scheme.

Nothing better illustrates this situation than the *Folk-Songs of England*, published by Novello's. It is to a consideration of this series - particularly as it affected Kidson - that we now turn.

Novello's *Folk-Songs of England*

> *He is neither crank nor pedant: his scholarliness and musicianship are ever subservient to his taste* (Winifred Shuldham Shaw [*on* Cecil Sharp] 1921:9).

Sharp was General Editor of Novello's *Folk-Songs* series, and it is evident from reading his letter to Kidson of 12th. July 1908 that Kidson had intended to contribute a volume to it. After considerable delay, Books I and II - Hammond and Sharp, and Vaughan Williams respectively - had just been published (*Musical Times*, 01.08.1908:554), and Sharp wrote that 'now we are under way I think we can crowd on more steam and get the next volumes out much more quickly'.

Yet Sharp had a number of reservations about Kidson's book. As it stood, there were not enough songs to make a volume 'anything like equal in size' to the two that had already appeared; and Moffat, Kidson's collaborator, had 'in no case harmonized more than a single verse'. Sharp further suggested that Kidson had in some way departed from 'the original folk words', and thought it would be 'a great pity' if Kidson's volume were to 'create a fresh precedent in this respect'.

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> *The history of popular songs in England is broken in many links - for much disturbance in the tradition has been caused by interpolations, in different cunning ways, of the scientist musician* (Scott, 1926:v).

There is perhaps a significant element of hypocrisy attached to Sharp's complaint. Although he confessed to having taken 'some slight liberties' with the words in

H.E.D. Hammond's *Folk-songs from Dorset*, the first volume of the series, Dean-Smith believes that the editing carried out to get the words into 'a singable form ... in the King's English' was 'considerable' (1954:33).

Sharp's amendments were nevertheless condoned by the *Musical Times*' reviewer, who felt that 'where an editor is fully imbued with the folk-song spirit and conscious of his responsibilities, lovers of folk-song need have no fear' (01.03.1908:171). Of course, since Sharp had himself determined these same aesthetic considerations, his suitability for the task was necessarily assured.

In addition to these complaints, Sharp found fault with Moffat's arrangements. As we have already seen, posterity has vindicated the stance which Kidson took in refusing to put 'old wine into new bottles' by harmonising the airs in *Traditional Tunes* (1891:v,vi). Yet a decade and a half later, harmonisation had become a prerequisite for inclusion in Sharp's series.

Although subsequently justified by Fox Strangways as a measure made necessary 'in order to get the songs sung' (1924:295), it nevertheless established new standards: and as a result, we might note with some irony, a harmonised edition of *Traditional Tunes* - published posthumously as *Folk-Songs of the North Countrie* (1927) - would be in preparation at the time of Kidson's death (Broadwood, 1927:iii).

But, to return to the matter of Kidson and Moffat's projected contribution to the Novello series, even

harmonisation - or, in John England's term, 'evening dress' - was not, in itself, enough. A particular style of tailoring was required: and, despite being a German-trained professional composer and arranger, with numerous publications to his credit, Moffat had, in Sharp's eyes, got it wrong.

Sharp complained that Moffat had failed to harmonise the modal airs in what he called a 'modal manner' - in other words, in the style which Sharp had decided would permit the retention of modal purity. Instead, Moffat had 'treated them in modern tonality, i.e. as though they were partly major and partly minor tunes'. Sharp acknowledged that 'many musicians', such as Stanford, had adopted Moffat's method in the past: but in doing so they had 'sacrificed many of the distinctive aural characteristics' of the airs.

Sharp expressed his reluctance to 'insist on a rigid uniformity' in all the books of the series, but wondered if it would be possible to persuade Moffat 'to reconsider his settings from this point of view, and to try to bring them more in line with those in the two vols. already issued!'

Some three months later, Kidson mentioned in a letter to Annie Gilchrist that 'I have sent my Folk Songs from Yorkshire to Sharp & I think they are going to now issue them after years of delay' (28.10.1908).

Kidson and Moffat's projected volume was never published.

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To demonstrate that this experience was not unique, we might turn to the composer H. Balfour Gardiner, who was also involved with the Novello series.

Balfour Gardiner had notated almost one hundred songs, in Hampshire, between 1905 and 1907. He gave some of his arrangements to Sharp, mentioning that certain of the melodies had been 'enhanced' by the use of chromatics ([letter, 16.09.1907, [*quoted in*] Lloyd, 1984:43). Like Grieg, Balfour Gardiner believed that 'conventional' harmonisation could be used to elevate folk material to an 'artistic level' - a similar assumption to that which underpinned Bartók's view that the 'spirit' of folk-song could best be represented through the use of 'modern' harmonisation. But, as we have already seen, Sharp had his own ideas on the matter. He told Balfour Gardiner that it was almost impossible to use modern chromatic harmonies 'without going astray' ([letter, 20.10.1907, [*quoted in*] Lloyd, 1984:45).

Balfour Gardiner evidently appealed to Littleton, of Novello, who left the decision, as Editor, to Sharp. Sharp then suggested that Gardiner should 'find another publisher willing to undertake a volume of his own settings'. The third volume of *Folk-Songs of England* included Balfour Gardiner's name in the *Preface* - it had been intended to leave reference to him out altogether - but only a 'scant' representation of the songs he had himself recorded. By this time, Gardiner's relationship with Sharp and his associates had completely broken down, and 'on that sour

note his involvement in folk-song collecting ended' (1984:46).

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Sharp's editorial policy in the Novello series had been based, he told the publisher, not so much on 'theory or argument' as 'feeling and temperament' ([*quoted in*] Fox Strangways, 1924:56). By this means, quasi-mystical sentiment - Mary Neal was for instance told in 1905 that children would learn, understand and appreciate their 'own' folk-music 'by a sort of spiritual sixth sense' ([*quoted in*] 1933:69) - becomes recast as 'expert' intuition. In the absence of more concrete criteria such decisions are unchallengeable, and Sharp had no qualms about legislating to composers whose grasp of music theory was far superior to his own.

Whilst Vaughan Williams believed that 'folk songs seem to take kindly to the harmony of any period at which a skilled musician may happen to treat them harmonically' ([*quoted in*] Kennedy, 1964:29), he also thought Sharp's settings to be 'often better than those of more technically gifted arrangers' (1933:217).

Percy Grainger, on the other hand, is reported to have privately expressed the opinion that 'Sharp's harmonic treatment of the tunes is revolting' ([*quoted in*] Lloyd, 1984:46).

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The Vitality of Melody

> ... *love of tune was in the very soul of him. Old and new, good tunes were to him like gems* (Ethel Kidson, 1948:129).

> *We have in folk-song the genuine melody of the people, and melody is the soul of music. The arrangement of parts as harmony is more or less scientific, and is subject to the changes of fashion and the advancement in knowledge* (Frank Kidson, *Leeds Mercury*, 21.02.1907)

> *... it is impossible that anything be universally tasted and approved of by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of the nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man* (Addison, *Spectator* no. 70, [*quoted in*] Kidson, 1926:iv).

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On 31st. January 1908, Kidson had written to Sharp:

> I have promised to let off a lecture on the Musical Musician on March 17. I have taken for my subject the Vitality of Melody & no doubt I shall say many things which the ordinary musician (so thoroughly steeped in technical harmony) will not agree with. We have been starved of melody for years & music has been given over to merely scientific treatment.

Broken down into its constituent parts, music can be said to consist simply of melody, harmony, rhythm and, in some formulations, timbre. Leaving the last two of these elements aside, we are left with the tune and its arrangement. To Kidson, their natural relationship was clear: harmony, ephemeral and artificial, should always take a subservient place to melody, the 'soul' of music.

His lecture to the Musical Association is an important key to our understanding of Kidson's perception of music. We gain an appreciation of the assumptions underlying his historical research, as well as insights into what might be called Kidson's view of the purpose of music. He chose to

speak on melody because

> I think perhaps that in these modern days melody is a little apt to be obscured by the delight in triumphs of technical construction, where the skilful harmonisation of separate parts is more a feature of composition (1908:81).

The fate of melody was a concern not solely restricted to Kidson. Following his, the very next paper given to the Musical Association would be *The Evolution of Melody*. As an ARCM[1], Thomas F. Dunhill, the speaker, could perhaps be seen as less partisan than Kidson. He nevertheless voiced his opinion that the composer who neglected melody had both "mistaken his vocation and misunderstood the elementary functions of music" (1908:101).

Kidson was certain that melody, "pure and simple", had held a far more elevated position for musicians in the past than it appeared to be accorded by contemporary composers (1908:81). In his own time, by contrast

> It is a generally felt opinion that anything tuney may be set down as cheap; but ... Where melody and harmony are united I need not tell you that melody has had, in many cases, much right to complain of the union (1908:81).

Yet whilst a good tune could suffer at the hands of the arranger, harmony was more than a mystery to a large section of the population:

> It may come as a shock to many, the knowledge that there are a vast number of people musical enough to appreciate good tunes to whom harmony is a sealed book. Sad it may be, but such is a fact. If we are to believe reliable evidence, folk-song singers are of this class (1908:81-2).

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[1] Associate of the Royal College of Music.

Frank Kidson was also essentially "of this class", as both Fuller Maitland, in the Chair, and Lucy Broadwood, in the audience, were doubtless well aware. The latter in particular had long known of the deficiencies in her friend's musical knowledge. After all, he had not tried to hide them. In October 1894 Kidson had written to propose collaboration on a book of old tunes, suggesting that 'with your harmony & our combined knowledge [*my emphasis*] we could induce some publisher to risk a venture'.

Other associates knew of his limitations. *Children's Tunes collected by Frank Kidson*, a fair-copy manuscript book held in the Mitchell Library, Glasgow [M18056], has been liberally annotated by Annie Gilchrist. In places, she has drawn attention to, and corrected, mistakes in Kidson's written music. We find, for instance, amendments to *Marquis et Marquise* (page 47), where she has written 'N.B. Flats must surely be <u>meant</u> where I have indicated them?' Similarly, against *Montagnard - Danse D'Auvergne* (page 53) has been added the comment: 'A very graceful tune. E*b* clearly should be D# wherever it occurs, however, and A*b* should be G#, as the tune is in the key of A minor'.

Kidson reciprocated by providing instruction on the Tonic system of notation for vocal music (October 1902), with which he perhaps felt more comfortable. To the best of my knowledge, Kidson issued only one publication - *Old Country Dances and Morris Tunes* ([?]1912) - where the tunes have been harmonised without acknowledged collaboration.

Ethel Kidson would later recall,

> Uncle was no musician, this he often regretted he felt it was a great loss. But if he knew little of his limitations it helped him to concentrate on Melody. A musician said, your uncle may know little of the Theory of Music but he has the best ear for a good tune of any man in England. This I think was so, for he regarded a tune in a [way] very different from most musicians. A tune to him was as much a work of art as a picture, not a mere pleasing jingle. He said every tune had a soul. And to make one was great art. It was a Godgiven gift, sometimes bestowed the most simple people and that was why these things should be treated with reverence ([?]1926:34-7).

Even the award of his honorary degree would cause amusement in the Kidson household on this account. Because he recognised himself to be 'a poor Musician', Kidson 'said it stood for Musical Arts', and '[w]e had many jokes about the letters M.A.', wrote Ethel ([?]1926:139).

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> *His primary interest in folk song collection was in the historical aspect and he always had a concern to trace the 'pedigree' of tunes* (*Mitchell Library Centenary Booklet*, 1977:80).

Kidson identified two types of melody in his Musical Association lecture. There were those which occurred in "certain definite periods", being generally "the known work of recognised musicians whose education and feeling are entirely of the age in which they composed". These might be popular in their own, or perhaps a later day. But they were generically distinct from others which "appear to belong to no assignable period, and seem to be for all time". Kidson called these "vital melodies":

> Some of these go to sleep for fifty or sixty years, or even a century, but they, like musical Rip van Winkles or Sleeping Beauties, are roused from slumber and take their place in the rank of modern music. Strange as it may appear, the man in the street accepts them quite readily and

> never notices that there is anything different from the rest of their fellows (1908:82).

For Kidson, there was only one way to determine whether a given melody was possessed of an ephemeral or "vital" character. He had no time for judgments handed down - or legislated - by élites. The matter must be settled by the people at large:

> Personally I believe in the popular verdict, when we can get that verdict into true focus. This focussing can only be done by at least two generations of people, and if a favourable verdict is returned by them, then I think we may accept as true art that which has won their approval. Therefore I rank as high-class melody that which has appealed to the masses of previous ages as well as to our own (1908:82) [*my emphasis*].

Indeed, tunes could manage well enough without the encumbrance of harmony, standing "by themselves as vital forces". It was not difficult to find instances of phrases of melodies being taken, either consciously or unconsciously, from earlier compositions, and incorporated into new ones. Kidson cited Handel as one reputed to have been "a big sinner" in this respect, and, "without throwing a stone at one of our bright English musicians", opined that Sir Arthur Sullivan might also be named as being, in some cases, indebted to older work (1908:85).

It is beyond doubt that this was a compositional technique which Kidson fully endorsed. It had greatly pleased Kidson when Arthur Sullivan - perhaps his favourite contemporary composer - had subscribed to the edition of only 200 copies of *Traditional Tunes* (Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:33-4,73).

In the discussion period following Kidson's lecture, Dr. Borland commented that

> With regard to Sullivan, it is an interesting question how far his popularity was due to the use of old English and familiar phrases. He was saturated with the old English songs, and he brought them into his works in little phrases, or sometimes longer ones. All through his music we find this one element of familiarity, which has made the public take to his music immediately (Kidson, 1908:96).

The music hall was also more than ready to appropriate old tunes, Kidson believed, with the result that street music heard on the piano-organs was of "a much higher quality from this reason alone" (1908:85).

He recounted the story of an old lady who kept a book shop in St. Martin's Lane, in London, from whom he used to buy country dance books. Despite his repeated reassurances, she had been "fully convinced" that Kidson bought them "for the purpose of working the tunes up into pantomime airs" (1908:86).

Lucy Broadwood had been told this same story some fourteen years earlier:

> Some years ago I used to buy when I came to London old dance books of a very obstinate old lady who had a shop. She settled it that I was a Music hall & pantomime composer (which I told her over & over again that I was not) & bought these old dance books for the purpose [of] concocting airs. Nothing has induced her to alter her opinion & it has frequently occurred to me that perhaps many music hall airs are <u>really</u> produced this way (letter, 14.10.1894).

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> *In solving a problem of this sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backwards* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *A Study in Scarlet* [1887]: Conan Doyle, 1929:134).

Kidson cited airs which, by reason of their vitality, had persisted in use for many centuries, either in an unaltered state, or slightly changed to suit later requirements. *Joan's placket is torn* was used to illustrate this contention. Although Kidson himself seems to have thought there was insufficient proof to support such a belief (1914:60:224), tradition held that this tune had been played at the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. It was later employed for satirical and political ballads, and then dropped out of use in the early part of the eighteenth century. "It was not dead, however. Good tunes do not die so early a death". After almost two centuries, the tune again came to light in the form of *The Cock o' the North* (1908:86).

Kidson explained that a number of popular melodies were of foreign origin: *Malbrook, In my cottage near a wood, Goosey, goosey gander,* and *The keys of heaven,* for instance, had all been traced to French sources. *The keys of heaven* had been composed, as *Ombres Chinois,* by Devigny in 1773 for a shadow-pantomime performance in Paris. It had subsequently become traditionalised in England, and appeared in Broadwood and Fuller Maitland's collection of *English County Songs*. This example demonstrated how a melody could retain its vitality "long after its original purpose had been served" (1908:88).

Kidson's extensive knowledge of old tunes - the result

of ten years work, his Index of 100,000 of them filled sixty manuscript volumes: the '*fons et origo* of the airs of the British people for the past 250 years' (Graham, 1927:48; *Portraits*, 1948:133) - enabled him to appreciate the hotch-potch of residual material picked up by the folk-song collector for what it really was:

> I could quote you many instances where airs are known by different names, and are noted down traditionally. A great many of the unlettered have a glorious knack of picking up an air by ear. A boy will spend his threepence or sixpence at a pantomime or music-hall and he will bring away (pretty correctly) every tune played or sung which takes his fancy. It is this facility of picking up and retaining that makes our folk-music so accurate in tradition (1908:88).

Kidson then gave an example of "a good foreign air" which had "passed down more or less traditionally in England". At the end of the seventeenth century, an Italian tune called *Pastorella* was known in England. It quickly became a favourite and, adapted to an English rustic song, was called *Blowzabella*. Only within the previous year or two a traditional Morris-dance tune had been collected, under the title of *How d'ye do*, which Kidson considered to be a survival of *Blowzabella* (1908:89). He also traced the progress of a tune brought to England at the end of the seventeenth century by "a party of Swedish tumblers", which was eventually adopted as their march by the Scottish weaving fraternity (1908:90).

Hornpipes and country dances had provided many examples of vital melody, and the Irish pipe and fiddle jigs were "fine melodies ... possessed of a lasting quality". Indeed, "[h]ow these Irish jigs have lived under

different names and pleased many generations of tune-lovers is a study in itself" (1908:91). The earliest version which Kidson had traced of *Father O'Flynn*, "a general favourite to-day", went under the title of *Yorkshire Lasses* (1908:92).

These examples were all provided to reinforce Kidson's contention that

> ... a good tune never dies, and ... it exists purely because of its melodic value, and apart from any words, good or bad, that from time to time are fitted to it (1908:95).

Moreover, popular tunes could be built up from well known phrases, and the "resultant mixture" could be carried "down the stream of general favour" (1908:95).

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The musical illustrations were 'most charmingly and sympathetically' played on the violin by Miss Dorothy Fletcher (*Musical Times*, 0.04.1908). Needless to say, this was done without the benefit of piano accompaniment.

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Folk-song in schools

> *Mr. Sharp is a great believer in the introduction of folk-songs for school singing. His newspaper war against the Board of Education on this point was carried forward with a vigour which well shows how earnest he was in his conviction* (Frank Kidson, *Leeds Mercury*, 21.02.1907).

> *There have been as many crimes committed under the banner inscribed 'Educational' as under the name 'Liberty'* (Kidson, 1914:51:46).

In the closing days of 1910 - four months after his participation in the Stratford Festival - Kidson received, at Sharp's suggestion, tickets for one of his lectures and a request to support him on the platform. Kidson wrote to Sharp to say that he would be pleased to do so, but wished to express his reservations about 'the idea of folk song in schools - at any rate as at present practised'. His main cause of objection was that

> Folk Songs are delicate morsels & while it is very delightful to hear your charming singer Miss Mattie Kay pull all the beauty out of them it is a different matter to hear a class of children singing the same songs without the knowledge, voice, & sympathy that such a singer as she possesses.

Kidson also complained of what he thought to be the 'very bad habit' which had crept in of 'making the children give mechanical gestures' to illustrate the song. 'I don't like this at all', he said.

Then there was the question of suitability of content, as folk-songs 'very often deal with man's & woman's passion', and it was 'hard to turn this into meat for children'.

Finally Kidson was concerned that if a song 'bears the stamp of a <u>school song</u>', then 'public singers' would fight

shy of it. This, he believed, was the reason why so few of 'our fine English songs' were sung at concerts, and people never heard their 'full beauty'.

Despite these reservations with regard to folk-song in school, Kidson concluded by saying

> None the less I shall be pleased to see you in Leeds & hope you will have time during the afternoon to come up to my house & have a chat & glance over my books (26.12.1910).

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Three days later, and after the lecture had taken place, Kidson wrote again to Sharp to reiterate his concerns:

> My chief objection to folk song in schools is that folk songs are <u>too</u> <u>good</u> for school singing, that it is like putting a very delicate & fragile thing into the hands of a child who cannot understand its full beauty & really destroys it; because it is a fact that public singers will not sing what bears the stamp of a school song. When Miss Kay sings <u>The Seeds of Love</u> or similar song she understands it, & pulls the full meaning out of it, & her audience also understand its passionate pathos; but to the child it is <u>Greek</u>, or ought to be.
>
> Also such songs are only suitable for <u>individual</u> singing, not for chorus singing. There are, of course, one or two folk songs that will bear chorus singing & might be introduced into schools, but the main fact remains that to sing a folk song well & to pull out of the simple words & air all the great beauty that lies within it is not a child's task, it is the task of an artist, &, of public singers, there are only few able to do this to the full - No, school, in my idea, is not the place for folk songs (29.12.1910).

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It is often difficult, in reading Ethel's *Life* of her uncle, to assess whose real voice lies behind the words. Particularly in relation to matters which were not directly

of her concern, her knowledge will have inevitably derived from things which Frank had told her. It seems reasonable to assume therefore that Ethel must have often been at least expressing Frank's opinions, if not reproducing actual phrases which he had used and she remembered. All that she has to say of Sharp is contained in one sentence:

> Mr. Cecil Sharp corresponded with Uncle, he was a man of most tenacious purpose and he set out to make Folk Song known the world over, and he undoubtedly succeeded though he was not the one to acknowledge the work of others in the field ([?]1926:107-8).

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The relationship between Kidson and Sharp was complex and, in some respects, evidently difficult. Kidson's continued importance as a folk-song authority was to some degree dependent on the level of interest in that subject which Sharp, through the cult, was able to arouse. Sharp, for his part, was content to use Kidson's presence on the platform to apparently endorse beliefs which - as he very well knew - Kidson did not share. In a sense, both appear to have needed each other.

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> ... *there's nothing a professional objects to more than being called an amateur - really the highest compliment that can be paid him - the lover of his art* (Kidson, 1916:80:172).

This chapter has demonstrated Kidson's recognition and rejection of the legislator's primary function as cultural manager. If, as Kidson believed, the 'popular verdict' alone was sufficient to determine 'true art' (1908:82), the legislator's privileged position as arbiter of taste was

thereby undermined. Definitions of art would no longer be 'in the hands of the faddist who has most will-power' (1914:51:46) [*my emphasis*]: instead, one person's view was of equal validity to that held by another:

> Art is not a subject to be treated as a lesson by which the pupil's own innate art conception is killed, crushed by the overpowering weight of some one else's. It is our curse, and the blighting of original thought, this "education" in art. True art is an individual growth, not a parasite (1914:51:46).

The notion of prescription - directing others, either for their own, or for a higher good - is inherent in both socialist ideology and the modernity which spawned it (*see* Bauman, 1992:178,221-3). Although 'socialism' means different things to different people, it is clear that Sharp, variously as 'Christian socialist', 'Conservative Socialist' and member of the Fabian Society, at least considered himself an adherent of 'socialist' principles (Fox Strangways, 1924:293;1933:202; Harker, 1982:47,60; Lloyd, 1967:14), and Frank Howes drew particular attention to his 'missionary fervour' (Grove, 1980). So despite his professed 'ready sympathy for working people and keen recognition of their qualities' (Lloyd, 1967:14), Sharp had no compunction about legislating to them in cultural terms. Indeed, since both art and its producers would simply be treated as tools to be used in ideological remoulding and education ([*see, for instance*] Rose, 1984), Soviet Realism would represent nothing more than the development of such a tendency.

Kidson rarely touched on political matters in his

writings. When he did, it was invariably dispassionately, and in relation to some historical matter. We have it on Lucy Broadwood's authority, however, that 'the increase of Socialism filled him with deep concern' (*The Times*, 15.11.1926). Kidson's populist stance - his emphasis on the authority of the individual, coupled with a mistrust of legislative direction - fully vindicates this assessment.

In the next chapter we look at how Kidson tried to re-establish his own position in relation to that of the cult.

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Chapter 11: BEYOND JURISDICTION?

> *In Babel, it is the loudest voice which is heard and not the most coherent message* (Chase and Shaw, 1989:10).

At the end of *Chapter 7* we saw that Sharp's attempt to establish his own position resulted in the publication of *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (1907), a text which represented 'a kind of manifesto of Mr. Sharp's line of thought' (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1912).

Kidson, in this chapter, tries to maintain his own position in relation to both Sharp's book and the 'cult' which it had helped to generate. Kidson's authority is now residual, and his ideas on folk-song are consequently judged in accordance with those which Sharp has legislated.

Disavowing those imposed attributes which supposedly rendered it an ideal instrument of social engineering, Kidson presents folk-song as nothing more than archaic popular song (*Choir*, 01.02.1912) - and is promptly criticised in the light of the new Sharpian orthodoxy. For failing to take account of the 'advance' in folk-song theory which Sharp's work was held to represent, Kidson's contribution to *English Folk-Song and Dance* (1915) was similarly unfavourably reviewed by one of Sharp's associates.

To a writer in the 1980s, Kidson's work provided confirmation that Sharp's *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (1907) had left his precursors - the pioneers - well and truly behind in theoretical terms. We consider the assumptions underlying such a response.

> *He was removed from the social circles of cliques and was the friend and helper of all fellow-workers* (Graham, 1927:49).
>
> *No extravagant claims in favour of folk-songs are put forward by Mr. Kidson. He would indeed limit their use* (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913:227).

Kidson's considered response to the cult, as it had become established, appeared in the *Choir* in February 1912. We can see how the views which Kidson had expressed in his Musical Association lecture were applied more directly to the realm of traditional music.

Through placing harmonic technique at the pinnacle of musical achievement, 'that for which technique was created' had been subordinated, thereby 'too often' creating a situation where 'the tail wags the dog!'. So Kidson welcomed the recent attention accorded to folk-song as a 'healthy sign', indicating a return to prominence of the displaced 'elemental standard' of melody.

In Kidson's view, it was 'illogical' that any vocal composition should be 'so interwoven as to prohibit any portion being separated from the instrumental passages'. Folk-song had never been 'hampered by such fetters', and its 'simple artlessness' now attracted those either 'jaded with', or unable to comprehend, contemporary composition.

The art song, too, had 'in times not far distant' been a song rather than a composition. Without diminishing its appeal, it had been sung without its original harmony, or set to fresh accompaniment, and therefore had 'the same charm and quality' as a folk-song.

Kidson blamed this 'modern tendency' in composition

for the general decline in singing. Moreover, the 'class of people' who had previously sung folk-songs now sang the products of the music hall, both for 'the simple reason that there is a distinct air to sing', and because 'it is, as was the folk-song in its day, up to date, or at least in current usage'.

This materialist view of folk-song as nothing more than archaic popular song deliberately took no account of the whole complex system of quasi-mystical beliefs upon which the cult and its programme had been founded: indeed, their whole rationale was to establish that there was no relationship between the two genres of 'folk' and 'popular'. Yet, for Kidson, songs were just songs, and the best were those that strayed least from 'that primal element, which was the very essence of its existence':

> A person sings because he is happy, or sad, or because he wishes to voice sentiments of love, patriotism, or worship. He may even, as in the case of old ballads, wish to give a musical charm to a rhyming narrative.
>
> Folk-song fulfils all these conditions and goes no further (1912:26:30) [*my emphasis*].

Kidson saw the attempt to revive the singing of folk-songs as 'a worthy mission', but one which nevertheless appeared to be both misguided and anachronistic. The project was 'beset with difficulties, which do not appear to be quite realised by those who advocate the scheme'. They failed to recognise that

> All history shows that not only in music, but in all other things, the general tendency is to go forward, and if an old fashion is revived, however worthily, it is only a revival for the moment, and does not affect the general forward flow (1912:26:30).

Kidson reiterated, on the subject of folk-song in school, those objections which he had already expressed to Sharp. His principal concern was that folk-song largely dealt with matters that 'are, or should be, above the comprehension of a child'. This 'unpleasant savour' could only be overcome by the extensive use of 'omissions and alterations': but since this would at the same time remove their essential character as 'folk-songs', they could no longer properly be described as such. His other main objection was that when a song, or type of song, had become associated with schools or 'handed over to the children', nobody would sing it on the concert platform (1912:26:31).

The profile of Kidson which appeared in the *Musical Herald* the following year reported his view that folk-songs were 'utterly out of place among young children', being 'too precious to drag in the mud' (01.08.1913:227).

As early as 1906, the *Westmorland Gazette* had decided that the pool of unpublished folk-songs still awaiting recovery must be nearing exhaustion (05.05.1906). This impression seems to have become more widespread, until, at the end of the decade, interest in the folk-song competition as a means of discovering new songs had effectively evaporated.

The *Report of the Annual General Meeting of the Folk-Song Society*, dated June 1909, noted that Kidson had adjudicated prizes for the best folk-songs at the Musical Competition Festivals of Pontefract and Retford in the course of that year, and both the South Nottinghamshire and

Pontefract and District Competitions received full coverage in the local press. Clearly reflecting the decline in popular interest, the folk-song element went unmentioned (letter from Pontefract Library, 08.03.1996; *Pontefract and Castleford Advertiser*, 09.05.1908, 15.05.1909; phone call from Retford Library, 26.02.1996).

One of Kidson's main concerns in relation to folk song in schools had been that through becoming associated with children, folk-song would be devalued by eventually becoming their exclusive preserve. As if to underline his point, the 1912 Kendal Festival featured no folk song competition; indeed, it had been discontinued some six years previously. Instead, in the Junior Competitions, where such items as Humperdinck's *Cradle Song*, Mendelssohn's *Evening Song*, Ethel Boyce's *A Song of Summer* and Schumann's *May Song* had once been representative, folk-songs in costume were now the order of the day.

We can trace the progression to this eventuality through the Irish and German folk-songs featured in 1908, and the Scottish songs, rounds from the National Song book, and English folk-songs which comprised the 1910 children's performances. The greater part of the 1912 Junior Competition was made up of renditions, in costume, of Sharp's arrangements of such songs as *The Sweet Nightingale*, *Midsummer Fair*, *Betty and her Ducks*, *Mowing the Barley*, *O, No John*, and *Flowers in the Valley* (Kendal Festival Programmes 1903; 1904; 1905; 1908; 1910; 1912).

The ghettoisation of folk-song as a children's

activity, a trend which Kidson had anticipated with foreboding, seemed well on the way to realisation.

A writer for the *Musical Herald* enquired of Kidson in 1913 whether 'any good folk-songs' had been discovered by means of the competitions at which he had adjudicated. "Very few", replied Kidson. Generally the songs sung had been variants of tunes which were already well known. Nevertheless, he believed that "the singing of these songs created a good deal of interest", and the competitions had been "most excellent in arousing respect for such songs" (01.08.1913:229).

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> *Art ... is a pure and unfettered delight; and the minute we find out any law or rule that has caused it to be art, that moment its spirit has fled and left a dead thing behind it* (Kidson, 1914:51:46).

The aesthetic frameworks which result from the implementation of legislative programmes incorporate rigid classifications and demarcations. Although subject to subsequent amendment or even rejection, the beliefs based on such categorisations, whilst in force, represent aesthetic truth to their adherents.

It was therefore inevitable that Kidson's article in the *Choir* should attract criticism from those who believed that the supposed communal origin of folk-song had bestowed special properties upon it.

One such was J. Heywood, whose letter featured in the following month's correspondence column of the *Choir*. The art song, he declared, did not have the '*same*' charm as

'the spontaneous music of the people'. Similarly, he could not agree that the class of people who formerly sang folk-song now sang the music hall production. Folk-song had 'taken possession of the minds of our respectable middle classes of both town and country', and he could not imagine that happening with the 'abominable trash which is howled by a certain uneducated class of people'. As for the editing of folk-song, both the Bible and Shakespeare had been edited without losing either 'dignity' or 'charm'. He concluded,

> Please allow us to teach the children to know and to love what we believe to be the natural and spontaneous music of our ancestors. Then we may hope (with Mr. Cecil Sharp) to have in the future Griegs and Glinkas of our own to do for English music what these patriotic musicians did for the music of their own countries (1912:60).

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> *... there are certain people who cannot take interest in a subject unless it is belarded with fictitious nonsense* ... (Kidson, 1922:152:145-6).

Kidson's *Folk-Song* article had been his first contribution to the *Choir*. Many more were to follow, but perhaps none were more reflective of Kidson's position with regard to the 'cult' than his *Folk-Song and the Popular Song*, written in response to Heywood's letter. This article 'aroused considerable attention at the time', and was reprinted after Kidson's death 'as a memorial to its gifted writer' ('L.' [J.T. Lightwood], 1927:7).

Kidson noted how he had been 'taken to task' by a correspondent for suggesting that those who formerly sang folk-song, and now sang the products of the music hall

because a 'distinct singable air' was a characteristic of both types of song, were of the same class of people. Yet he adhered to his opinion, and pointed out that the 'popular' part of the folk-song movement had not been to provide a songless people with songs, but to substitute songs of merit for what Heywood had referred to as 'abominable trash'.

It was a matter of record, in Kidson's view, that folk-song had died out in country villages, and the music hall 'ditty' was to be found in its place. Many people fostered a hope that the folk-song could be brought back as an element of village life. Kidson thought this a cause 'worthy of encouragement', and he did not wish to 'throw cold water on any such scheme of revival'.

Yet when folk-song had been sung, it was 'a very living thing - it was, in fact, the current song'. It had not been taught by the village school-master to his scholars, but was rather 'a spontaneous expression of lyric enthusiasm' about subjects which interested the singers. There were both 'pure' and 'undesirable' songs, and 'ditties which are equivalent to the 'abominable trash'' were also to be found amongst folk-songs.

Kidson surely drew on his own experience in saying that 'every collector' has had such songs offered to them, the tunes frequently 'worthy', but the words 'best forgotten'. Indeed, '[t]he true folk-song, pure and beautiful, is not to be obtained in great plenitude. It occurs with the rarity of a precious stone ...'

So, if they now sang at all, that class who formerly sang folk-song had turned to music-hall songs because of 'the tunelessness of modern songs'. It was only in the music-hall, Kidson believed, that a tune could be found which 'an ordinary person, not specially cultured in music, can sing or whistle to himself or to others' (1912:32:150).

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In his 1906 Sheffield lecture, Kidson said it was all very well to condemn the Music Hall 'comic' or 'sentimental' song, when the latter, especially, was so often of 'such a clap trap character'. But, he asked, were they 'over burdened' with modern songs of good quality which were suitable to replace these for popular street singing?

Hearing a 'catchy air', the listener might think it all 'very obvious and that it could be spun out by the yard'. But, he continued,

> ... let us not condemn as deplorable the taste that can find pleasure in it. The singer is singing songs, which so far as sentiment & morality go, are irreproachable. If we would rather that this taste was of a higher kind let us offer some substitute which to him would be equally satisfactory but better in art - no easy matter I can tell you (06.09.1906:8-10).

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Whilst musical culture 'in schools and elsewhere' had 'increased twentyfold' in recent years, 'spontaneous and popular' singing - leaving aside the music-hall - had 'decreased in the same proportion'. Kidson laid the blame for this situation directly on the music schools. Because of their hostility towards any song with 'street

popularity', they had failed to offer any acceptable substitute for popular singing which could act as 'a counterblast' to the music-hall song.

Kidson looked back to the eighteenth century as a time when the works of such composers as Boyce, Arne, Dibdin, Hook, and Shield, 'the best of their time', were 'on the lips of high and low', because 'they composed *tunes* that people could sing and enjoy'. But modern composers - with the possible exception of Sullivan - were either unwilling, or unable, to write melody. In consequence, people had been obliged to turn to the oral tradition, in the shape of 'rustics or illiterate persons who cannot read or put down a note of music', in order to discover it. The sources available to the person who sought melody were either folk-song, 'or its alternative, the music-hall song' [*my emphasis*].

Kidson's tastes could perhaps best be described as both populist and conservative. Simplicity, for him, represented the ultimate artistic virtue; whilst 'cleverness', its antithesis, was frequently no more than a veneer which attempted to compensate for simplicity's absence. As he had several years earlier told gatherings of the Dickens Fellowship, the works of Dickens epitomised this essential quality:

> While there is no question as to his deep insight into all phases bad & good of human life, & while he can depict every one of these in the truest colours, yet he [is] so truly great as to be simple & you will find it is only the half geniuses who are too clever to be simple (1903-6:II:2-3) [*my emphasis*].

Kidson characterised the indifference which melody had suffered as 'part of that great wave which has swept over the arts and literature'. Contemporary culture required that life should be looked upon with 'a jaundiced eye', and the individual had to accept a 'bitter pessimistic philosophy' which 'upsets all previously received notions'. Literature and fine art depicted matter which previously had been considered either offensive or 'unworthy of art treatment', and people dared not accept anything that could be classed as 'pretty', or compose or like music that was 'tuney'.

In the face of such impositions, it was necessary to foster folk-song

> as a precious spark of light among so much darkness; for certainly, though we may claim to have made many advances in musical taste and execution, yet it cannot be said to have affected that personage commonly referred to as 'The man in the street' (1912:32:150).

As to the revival of interest in folk-songs 'among the class who formerly sang them', Kidson noted that 'many workers' were involved in this scheme, and their efforts deserved success. But, he warned, '[t]hose who study to solve the problem would do well to realize the position a little more than seems to be the case'.

Kidson's main concern was that the wider socio-cultural context in which folk-song had its place had been superseded. Not only was the interest that an old folk-singer had in his or her song quite different to that of the collector, but the conditions which caused them to sing, and to like the song, were 'different from what holds

to-day'. Their 'principal appeal' would lie in the words, generally the least interesting aspect of the song to the 'modern' collector, because the song told a story or voiced a sentiment. Most likely, the singer would fail to appreciate the 'great significance' of the melody.

The earliest songs had been ballads. Some of these, such as *Lord Bateman, The Outlandish Knight*, and *Barbara Allen*, had survived because of the interest to be found in their 'romantic stories'. When interest in such romances waned, the 'folk-song maker' took themes from their own times. These might concern what Kidson called 'a maiden's tragedy', or deal with a person's occupation, or poaching, or the press gang.

> All these examples illustrated his contention that
>
> The chief thing to note about all this is that from one cause or another the folk-song was alive among its singers. It had an interest which it would be difficult to revive (1912:32:151).

The singer might remember a song because they associated it with their father or mother, but would not value it for 'antiquarian interest' alone. This was a favourite theme of Kidson's - previously expressed, for example, almost verbatim at the 1902 Kendal Festival, and in his Sheffield lecture of 1906. The reader will recall that Kidson's mother had been influential in the development of his own interest in folk-song, and it was doubtless a belief resulting from his own experience.

But the 'distractions' of modern life, particularly in the form of the 'latest American importation', acted against the continued preservation of songs through the

oral tradition. The best that Kidson thought could be hoped for was that

> If a folk-song can drift downward to the younger generation as a pleasant memory, it may rest for a time among the kind of people who gave it birth; let this then be our aim (1912:32:151).

Yet if English composers continued to 'follow the path that our folk-song indicates', the 'moribund if not dead' school of English music could be revived. Furthermore, if 'British melody' were to be given a 'little chance' in the concert hall, the welcome it received would 'cause astonishment'. Kidson asked,

> Are popularity and art so wide asunder that they can never join? The snobbery of cult has done the worst possible harm to English music, and excluded it from its proper place. Once let it take this place, we shall not have to complain that our villagers sing nothing but music-hall 'trash' (1912:32:151).

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As to the revival of the morris dance, so crucial to Sharp and his associates, Kidson's position can be summarised in concise terms, and in his own words. In a paper entitled *In the Days of My Grandfather* which he delivered to Crossgates Baptist Fellowship on 8th. December 1914, Kidson makes his stance on this issue perfectly clear. Speaking of those times a century earlier, he expressed the view that

> The morris dance which is so much in favour in girls' schools now-a-days was simply confined to heavy footed farm labourers on a village green - which in my opinion is the proper place for it with the proper performers (1914:42) [*my emphasis*].

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> *When first I took up the study of folk song, nearly thirty years ago, no one could say that too much attention was paid to it, or that it held the respectable position it now does* (Kidson [*lecture at Sheffield*] 15.09.1906).

> *Musical taste has always run in cycles. Just at present we hear a good deal about Folk-Song, and it has become much of a fashion to admire these simple songs and melodies. The present writer is old enough to remember when folk-song had no such welcome accorded to it and when no cult was formed around it* (Kidson, *Leeds Mercury*, 21.02.1907).

In September 1908, Kidson wrote an account of *Revels at Woodsome Hall* for the *Yorkshire Weekly Post*. Woodsome Hall was the home of Lady Frances Legge, who had visited Kidson in the company of Lucy Broadwood and Fuller Maitland in 1893 (letter, Kidson to Broadwood 14.5.1893; Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:77). After a hesitant start (letter to Lucy Broadwood, 09.01.1898), Kidson and Lady Frances appear to have become friends, she dispensing afternoon tea as they discussed Thackeray and the 'later writers' (*Yorkshire Weekly Post*, 12.09.1908).

Despite it being the end of summer, the revels, in old-fashioned costume, centred on the crowning of a May Queen. A 'whole army' of green-jacketted and peak-capped boys mingled with the Queen's attendants. Robin Hood was there, as also was a jester 'in motley red and yellow'. The Queen was crowned, and presented with both a sceptre and floral offerings. In the meantime, the Maypole dancers had got ready, and

> ... some of the prettiest tripping I have seen is done. The plaited ribbons make all sorts of patterns round the pole, and gipsy tents and spider webs are produced like magic; nothing could have been the better done (12.09.1908).

It had occurred to 'the promoter' that since various antiquaries and folklorists were 'picking up the traditional heritage of our land in song, game, and dance', it might be a worthwhile trying to revive the games played by the village children (12.09.1908).

A letter which Kidson sent to Annie Gilchrist shortly afterwards tells us who this 'promoter' had been:

> Ethel & I helped to engineer a little function at Woodsome Hall near Huddersfield. There was a lot of village children danced the old ring games as current in the district. There seemed really very little fresh but I wish you could have been there. You were away at Sunderland Point or I should have tried to have tempted you down to note down variants.
>
> We had several rehearsals & have got a list somewhere of all the games the children knew (28.10.1908).

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The reader might well be surprised to learn of Kidson's active participation in such an event. But his hostility towards the promotion of folk-song amongst children did not extend to children's games and songs. After all, it was their natural province.

The level of interest which the cult had awakened in such matters also meant that Kidson's expertise could hopefully be turned to profit. The publisher Curwen for instance supplied to schools an extensive catalogue of 'folk' related material - for singing games, morris and Playford dances, folk and national songs, play drills, school marches, foreign folk dances, Maypole exercises, and a host of other activities - in addition to the bells, rosettes, hats, beansticks, Maypoles and braids deemed

necessary to carry them out. Kidson's expressed antipathy towards morris in school did not preclude the arrangement of country dances for children's performance, and sundry advertisements in the volume he issued in association with Percy Fletcher (1914) show how significant this market had become.

Alfred Moffat was similarly reluctant to pass up such an opportunity. He and Kidson together would produce five volumes of children's material: *75 British Nursery Rhymes* (1906); *80 Singing Games; old, new, and adapted* (1907); *Children's Songs of Long Ago* (1907); *The Minstrelsy of Childhood* (1911); and *100 Singing Games: old, new and adapted* (1916).

Moffat demonstrated his pragmatic approach in a letter to his collaborator:

> If you send on your specimen <u>games</u> & the tunes I will arrange the latter so you can commence an attack at once. I do not think that we should have a difficulty in convincing old [*illegible name*] of the goodness of the idea. Strauss - Aug's[1] head man - told me that they were satisfied with the sale of the last kid's book ('Friday').

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It is interesting to consider the degree to which Kidson and Moffat were able to capitalise on the market created by the cult whilst remaining immune to its ideology. For instance, in his Preface to *75 British Nursery Rhymes*, the first of these collaborations, Kidson acknowledges the perennial appeal of old nursery rhyme, and

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[1] Abbreviation of Augener, the publisher.

the necessity of providing 'the genuine article' for children. It could well be argued that in half-seriously suggesting this perceived affinity to be the result of reincarnation - whereby 'the babe of today takes kindly to the rhymes of his other infancies' (1906:*Preface*) - Kidson was demonstrating his determination to circumvent any ascription to racial inheritance or communal origin.

Although Kidson thought folk-song unsuitable for children because they could not, or should not, be able to understand it, he felt it was 'not in the least necessary that the child should altogether understand' their nursery rhymes (1906:*Preface*). In an endorsement of the approach taken by the Board of Education, the singing game as a school activity also received Kidson's approval; not least because he felt school to be 'a rather severe discipline for a young body and brain to undergo without some such break' (1907:*Preface*).

More privately, Kidson's view of this 'rather severe discipline' found expression in a letter to Sharp. We have already seen that Sharp's sustained criticism of the educational system derived less from concern about structure than content: mechanistic instruction in characteristically English material, as at Stratford, represented Sharp's ideal. Through moulding children to accord with modernity's particular requirements, schools would produce a nation with the capacity to hold its own in the modern world. His correspondent, characteristically, saw things differently:

If I had children who were forced to go to Board School I think I should go off my head! The absurd cruel system cram of useless knowledge the lack of individual teaching, & the whole waste of time & brain is appalling. You see the result daily in the dull stupid children who are in the process of being ground between the mill stones. Also in the uneducated, unoriginal, men & women who have passed through it. If there is anything makes my "dander riz" it is the education question (15.09.1906).

The *Minstrelsy of Childhood* was made up of songs which were thought to be specifically suitable for children, and featured several 'in which a British boy may find outlet for the love of his nation, and sing the praise of those who helped build it up' (1911:*Preface*).

Songs of Britain (1913), a collaboration undertaken with Martin Shaw - who had toured Europe from 1906 to 1908 as musical director for Isadore Duncan (*Musical Herald*, October 1920:439-42) - was compiled very much in the same vein.

Kidson explained in his *Preface* that the tunes presented in this collection were 'of varying degrees of antiquity', and had 'been subjected to no alteration'. On the other hand, he had in some instances found it necessary to either 'modify' the words or completely rewrite them. The words of *Gee ho, Dobbin* (1913:70) and *The Pretty Girl Milking her Cow* (1913:186) were entirely the work of Frank and Ethel Kidson respectively.

Shaw's autobiography would later reveal that his brother Geoffrey's appointment as His Majesty's Inspector of Music 'led indirectly' to *One Hundred Songs of Britain*, which he referred to as 'my first important publication'.

At the time of writing, he claimed it to be 'still in use in schools and training colleges' (1929:106).

Kidson and Moffat's other volumes of songs, *The Minstrelsy of England* (1901), and *English Songs of the Georgian Period* (n.d. ([?]1911)), its successor, were directed specifically towards the more adult market, as indeed was their *Dances of the Olden Time* (1912).

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English Folk-Song and Dance

> *To the man who loves art for its own sake ... it is frequently in its least important and lowliest manifestations that the keenest pleasure is to be derived* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Copper Beeches*, [1892]: Conan Doyle, 1928:275).
>
> *An ordinary song or ballad, that is the delight of the common people, cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or ignorance* (Joseph Addison, *Spectator*, no. 70 [*quoted in*] Kidson, 1915[a]:3]).

Kidson continued some of the themes expressed in the *Choir* articles in his contribution to *English Folk-Song and Dance* (1915[a]), a publication in which Mary Neal and he had written their respectively allocated - but far from complementary - sections independently.

The 'increased standard' of technique in both composition and performance had been paralleled by a corresponding neglect of 'certain very sacred and essential things'. Both beauty and art had been sacrificed in the interests of craftsmanship and complexity, and the 'simple melody' that sufficed in 'a less cultured age' no longer found a place either in contemporary composition, or 'in the esteem of a certain class'.

The 'melodic starvation' which this situation incurred was the 'probable' cause of the popular turn towards folk-music; which, he noted with evident sarcasm, had been 'dragged from obscurity and declared by competent musical judges to be worthy of consideration' (1915[a]:4-5). Its inherent 'indefinable' quality of 'earnestness' - 'the soul of art work' - together with its characteristic 'good faith' and 'sincerity', now made folk-song appeal not only to 'the class for which it was made', but also to 'a higher culture'. Folk-song's durability was in consequence assured, whereas '[w]ork of greater cleverness if it lack this great asset of earnestness cannot do more than please a particular cult for the moment' (1915[a]:36).

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Sharp had, to say the least, been greatly annoyed (Fox Strangways, 1933:86,211) to discover that his name appeared neither in the section on *English Folk-Music* (1910:V:635-7 [Fuller Maitland]) nor that dealing with the *Folk-Song Society* (1910:V:640 [Kidson]) when the 1904 edition of *Grove* was updated.

But although *English Folk-Song and Dance* appears to have been completed some two years before it was issued (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913: *Musical Times* [*correspondence*] 01.12.1915), it had by that time become impossible to write a book on folk-song which did not in some way both acknowledge Sharp's work and touch on the doctrine of communal evolution and development.

Kidson dealt with this doctrine in a manner which

highlighted his scepticism:

> Those who hold this theory appear to assert that a folk-song with its music has had a primal formation at some early and indefinite time, and that this germ, thrown upon the world, has been fashioned and changed by numberless brains according to the popular demand, and has only met with general acceptance when it has fulfilled the requirements that the populace has demanded. This change is called its 'evolution' ... (1915[a]:13).

Kidson granted that there existed 'an obvious truth' in such a contention: and we should remember that he had spoken on the evolution of the folk-song at the 1902 Kendal Festival. But before this doctrine could be generally accepted, it 'surely' needed 'much modification' (1915[a]:14).

At root, Kidson believed that the doctrine of communal origin, in its present formulation, represented the triumph of ideology over scholarship. By extension, it provided a convenient mask, or even justification, for ignorance. His assertion, already quoted, that 'The mystery of so-called communal origin can often be solved by research among early printed matter' (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913:228), provides ample evidence for this contention.

So when the writer of the *Musical Herald* article enquired "Are folk-songs heaven-born, or of communal origin, or were they not born at all - like Topsy?", he was able to report that 'Mr. Kidson knocks on the head a good deal of nonsense which has been heard on this score'. In a clear reference to the cult, and the text - *English Folk-Song: some conclusions* - in which their ideology had been enshrined, Kidson declaimed that

> Conjectures are not conclusions [*my emphasis*], for such must stand the scrutiny of men who want proofs (01.08.1913:228).

In Kidson's estimation, folk-song underwent change as the result of either 'conscious' or 'unconscious' alteration. Unconscious change would simply result from 'imperfect remembrance' on the part of singers. Conscious alteration, on the other hand, might be the effect of the difficulties which individual singers experienced in attaining certain intervals. Or it might result simply from choice. Alteration in the instrumental rendering of folk-music would 'chiefly' derive from the performer's lack of skill on a particular instrument. After all, what might be difficult to play on a flute could be easy on a fiddle, so an alteration might be purposely made for facility of performance. But, he emphasised, such an eventuality would be 'decidedly not evolution, nor communal origin' (1915[a]:14-5).

Again, either by 'traditional passage', or by 'wilful alteration', a tune might develop into several forms. This would result in a situation where airs would be found which had both points of similarity and points of difference. In some cases the likeness might be so close that the different tunes would be classed as 'variants'. Singers, Kidson believed, usually stuck to a melody 'as far as their memory or skill permits' (1915[a]:33).

Well-known folk-songs would be adapted to different airs for the 'obvious' reason that they had been read from a ballad sheet, but the particular tune had not been known.

In this instance the singer might use a tune with which they were already familiar, or adapt one, or compose a composite tune from the stock musical phrases which they knew from other melodies. As a result, a particular folk-song could be sung to many different airs, and this again could not be classed as evolution (1915[a]:33-4).

The book was reviewed in the *Musical Times* (1.11.1915: 670-1) by E. Phillips Barker, one of Sharp's associates. Although Kidson had been careful to present *English Folk-Song* as 'a very slight dissertation upon a complex subject' which did not 'pretend to do more than enter into the fringe of it' (1915[a]:4), Barker felt that he had 'underrated the difficulty' of writing 'a small manual', and the review was far from favourable.

By way of contrast, Barker had been enthusiastic in his review of Sharp and MacIlwaine's *Morris Book, Parts 1-3*, for the *Musical Times* (01.02.1911:84-6), and had attended that year's Stratford Festival as the leader of a sword-dance team from his home town of Nottingham (01.10.1911:653). He also collaborated with Sharp in the preparation of his *Introductions* to *The Sword Dances of Northern England* (Broadwood, 01.12.1915:731). It seems certain that Barker's status as one of the cadre of 'like-minded people' which Sharp had recruited (Harker, 1985:198-200,204-10) - or at least ended up with - made his hostile reaction to Kidson's work inevitable.

From within the consensus - in which I include Barker - the assumption would have been that any worthwhile text

on folk-song must necessarily take Sharp's *English Folk-Song* as its starting point. Yet not only did Kidson fail to build on the supposedly 'scientific' truths contained within the cult's manual, but actually demonstrated severe reservations about the theory of communal origin, its central tenet. So whilst he believed that the origin of folk-song needed 'very careful handling', Barker felt that Kidson's heretical treatise had manifestly failed to provide it.

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> *His kindly nature ever prevented him from criticising in public the 'discoveries' of certain modern folk-song enthusiasts who have turned the art into a commercial undertaking. No. Kidson could have told them a thing or two that would have surprised them, but he was content to let them go their own way* ('L.' [J.T. Lightwood], 1927:205:7-8).

Harker is quite correct in suggesting that the most remarkable feature in the development of 'what passed for 'folksong' theory', after the publication of *English Folk-Song* in 1907, was its 'Sharp-centredness'. As he appreciates, Sharp had set the terms of debate even for those who disagreed with many of his particular ideas. Because Sharp's text had tried to present a relatively coherent set of ideas and assumptions, others were forced either to produce 'a full-blown alternative theory of their own', or seek to modify particular elements of Sharp's argument.

As Harker sees it, the latter course was chosen, and nobody took on his theory as a whole: not only the 'older guard at the Folk Song Society', but even 'the younger

people who collected, arranged and published songs in the later 1900s and the 1910s' (Harker, 1985:204). Indeed, Kidson's section of *English Folk-Song and Dance* provides him with 'adequate evidence of the Society's intellectual and methodological arrested development' (1985:204-6).

But implicit in this view is the characteristically modernist assumption that Sharp's book necessarily represented a step forward. Kidson, and the rest of the 'older guard', patently didn't think that it did. To them, it was no more than an aberration, and they were content to remain secure in the conviction that their own established views on folk-song were both inherently and self-evidently correct.

Although writing of a different context, Steele highlighted the difficulty - necessarily to be faced by all legislative cults - of finding a line between 'offering genuine intellectual leadership and appearing as a merely élitist fringe of eccentrics' (1990:172). No doubt it is quite possible to appear in either category to different constituencies at the same time.

Whilst he was content to acknowledge Sharp's 'vigorous methods of bringing the subject before the public' (1915[a]:47), Kidson never gave credence to Sharp's quasi-mystical ideas on what folk-song was supposed to represent. The cult would have its day, and things would settle down again.

Of course, it didn't happen that way. Edel has characterised antiquarianism as representing 'the failure

to differentiate between the important and the trivial' (1984:103), and 'antiquarianism for its own sake' certainly held no attraction for Sharp, the 'out and out Radical' (*Music and Letters*, January 1921:3).

But detailed knowledge of the 'trivial' - in contrast to an excessive dependence on more esoteric criteria - at least provides some firm grounding for identifying what might be described as the salient 'facts'. Sharp's text had instead provided a belief system which, appealing directly to the national audience, rendered the 'older guard's' antiquarian knowledge redundant. Anything further which issued from that quarter could now only be viewed as archaic and pedestrian.

It was of little consequence that the *Choir* would continue to proclaim Kidson as 'the greatest living authority on folk songs and folk music' (01.01.1917:24). From a postmodernist perspective, power creates knowledge, rather than knowledge power (Joyce, 1995[b]:8), and Sharp's position at the centre of the cult validated that particular form of 'knowledge' which he had presented in *English Folk-Song*.

The legislator's 'authoritative statements' become 'correct and binding' (Bauman, 1987:4), and a new orthodoxy, based on the supposed generic distinction between 'folk' and other music, had been established. It had been grasped by Heywood, as we have seen, and would be reiterated many years later by the critic Frank Howes.

Fox Strangways, Sharp's biographer - 'Foxy' to Howes

- had been responsible for 'pitchforking' him into the editorship of *Folk Song Journal* when that position was relinquished by Lucy Broadwood (Howes, 1969[b]:9,11). 'Popular taste is either no taste at all or bad taste, even in a democratic community which takes its government from a majority vote', Howes declared. Folk music, on the other hand, 'is popular music in quite another sense' (1962:241-2).

Whilst Kidson, as we have seen, believed that 'true art' could derive only from popular approval (1908:82), Howes contended that this same popular approval would guarantee its antithesis.

The aesthetic can be used to both unite and divide. A 'folk' canon, the construction of an élite cult, would impose unity on the national level by percolating downwards through the education system. At the same time, all other aesthetic demarcations with their associated socio-cultural distinctions would remain intact. In short, and to recast Kidson's words (1912:32:151), the 'snobbery of cult' would ensure that 'popularity and art' remained 'so wide asunder'.

But whether the unwillingness to jettison their own beliefs, derived from years of patient research, in favour of Sharp's hastily constructed and ill-informed text - interpretation unencumbered by 'fact' - really demonstrates 'intellectual and methodological arrested development' on the part of the old guard, is a question which deserves only one answer.

> *You know my method. It is founded upon the observation of trifles* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Boscombe Valley Mystery* [1891]: Conan Doyle, 1928:97).
>
> *... he was painfully accurate ... when he offered a statement of fact one could rely upon it* (H.T., 12.11.1926).

Barker's self-assurance in reviewing *English Folk-Song and Dance* must have got the better of him, for his most unfortunate and ill-advised criticism of Kidson was over a matter of fact. It could never have been less than foolhardy to question the accuracy of Kidson's statements. But Barker's recklessness was compounded when his challenge happened to concern the very tune which Kidson had selected to exemplify the 'vital' melody in his Musical Association lecture (1908:86) [*see Chapter 10*]. 'Surely it was *Jumping Joan*, not *Joan's Placket*, that was played at the execution of Mary Queen of Scots', Barker wrote (01.11.1915:670).

The criticism accorded Mary Neal's independently written section of the book was even more scathing. Barker thought it 'difficult to deal seriously' with her contribution, and, after heaping scorn on her *Introduction*, commented that '[d]etailed criticism of the rest is scarcely profitable'. Again he questioned a matter of fact, in this case the continued use of the Northumbrian small pipes (01.11.1915:670-1).

W.G. Whittaker wrote to the *Musical Times*, as one holding 'no brief' for the authors of the book, to confirm that there were still some forty or fifty small-pipe players in Northumberland and Durham. He also commented that 'when a review is an almost continuous complaint

against inaccuracy ... one naturally expects the reviewer to be a model of accuracy himself' (01.12.1915:731).

In a similar vein, Lucy Broadwood observed that Barker had 'dwelt so little on the many virtues, and so much on the shortcomings of this small book' that she wished, 'in justice', to point out that 'in several instances where the reviewer has questioned the accuracy of the authors, they are right and he is wrong'.

Joan's Placket is torn and *Jumpin' Joan* were one and the same tune, whilst the small pipes were 'alive and doing well'. She also took issue with Barker's charge that Neal's section on the origins and history of folk-dance had been 'an object lesson in uncritical method'. For the reader's benefit, wrote Broadwood, Neal had presented 'a variety of opinions and speculations gathered from sources old and new'. Since survivals in 'folk-custom' and art were 'still shrouded in mystery', she thought it all to the good that 'diverse theories should be aired though not necessarily accepted'. Indeed, in his collaboration with Sharp on the *Introductions* to *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, where folk-dances and mummers plays were traced to primitive sacramental rites, fertilisation ceremonies and sacrifice, Barker had done very much the same thing. That Barker 'should censure another author for indulging in very similar speculations and references' put Broadwood in mind of Warburton's maxim that 'Orthodoxy is my doxy; heterodoxy another man's doxy' (01.12.1915:731).

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> *I fear it is a thankless business. I can discover facts, Watson, but I cannot change them* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *Thor Bridge* [1922]: Conan Doyle, 1928:1217).

Kidson himself commented that Barker's criticism appeared to concern the 'full treatise on a large and complex subject' which he hadn't written, rather than the 'slight entrance into the fringe of the subject' which he had. Kidson concluded that

> Mr. Barker's remarks on folk-song origin are somewhat involved, and though much might here be said to defend my theories, I prefer to let that matter rest. If my opinions clash with his, I cannot help it. I venture to think my own views are sufficiently clearly given for an average reader to follow, and either to agree or disagree with (01.12.1915:730-1).

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One person who was in agreement with Kidson was J.T. Lightwood, editor of the *Choir*, who reviewed *English Folk-Song and Dance* for that journal. Except for naming her as one of the authors, Lightwood's review made no mention whatsoever of Neal's contribution.

Lightwood was convinced that too much had been claimed for folk-song. Its value had been 'absurdly exaggerated by certain over-enthusiastic 'collectors'', one of whom - surely a reference to Sharp - had even claimed that the recovery of English folk-song would eventually lead to the foundation of 'an English National School of Composition'.

Lightwood considered such claims 'extravagant', as any connection between the two was 'but slight'. But since folk-song afforded 'an interesting study from a[n] historic point of view', he 'cordially commend[ed]' Kidson's work,

apparently considering it worthy of supplanting Sharp's *English Folk-Song* as the definitive text:

> Mr. Kidson is our leading authority on folk-songs, and he has been working in this field longer than anyone else; but, with all his knowledge and experience, he is far too wary to rush into 'some conclusions' on the subject, as another writer unwarily did some years ago [*my emphasis*]. In the volume before us, Mr. Kidson has dealt with skill on various aspects of his subject, and in less than a hundred pages has given us a large amount of carefully digested and well-arranged information on the subject. On disputed points he avoids being didactic, while at the same time he presents the pros and cons in a very sane and lucid manner (February 1916:38).

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The *Musical Herald* of January 1915 (p. 18) reported on a lecture on the subject of 'English Folk-Songs' which Kidson had given to the Association of Organists at the Hotel Metropole in Bradford. The reviewer commented simply that 'Mr. Kidson looked hopefully to a reversion to simple melody, and preferred that folk-song should be sung by adults and not in the schools'.

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Despite the support of colleagues such as Lightwood, Kidson's authority had lost its context. Under conditions of modernity the newest is always the best, the latest always the most advanced. Certain elements of old music had been adopted by Sharp, imbued with new meaning, and recast for the future. However ill-founded, his ideas were now at the centre of folk-song discourse: and, as both Lloyd and Harker have perhaps inadvertently demonstrated, reflexivity would keep them there. Although Kidson clearly felt justified in his adopted stance, his refusal to fully

engage with this discourse ensured that his work would increasingly be interpreted as reactionary and outmoded. Indeed, Kidson had confirmed his own pioneer status: outside the cult, the only available position was in its wake.

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FIXED POSITIONS

> *... every judgment made about the arts tells you more about the person making the judgment than it does about the arts* (Brian Boydell [*quoted in*] Dungan (1997:10).

It could with justification be claimed that Kidson's great knowledge of printed music may have led him to an excessive reliance on its authority: a characteristic which caused both Broadwood (01.01.1927:42) and Vaughan Williams (1927:51) to describe him as Chappell's direct, but more knowledgeable and accurate successor. Kidson admired Chappell, but had never corresponded with him. As he told Broadwood, '[i]n his lifetime he stood on a much higher pedestal than ever I dared approach' (letter, 15.12.1893).

Kidson's continual search for the earliest recorded appearance of melodies or songs inevitably served to buttress the underlying assumption that, somewhere, an 'original' version awaited discovery. If this were to be found, and accepted as 'correct', then versions recovered in the field could be measured against it. By this means, an assessment might be made of the perceived accuracy of the oral tradition as a parallel mode of transmission, in the light of how closely the two versions still corresponded. As the *Musical Herald* revealed:

> From the first Mr. Kidson has made a point of referring to early printed sources to verify the accuracy of old singers, where possible; for some singers, by reason of great age and quavering voices, sing a melody flat and out of tune. In some instances corruption has crept in, but on the whole tradition is found to be wonderfully accurate (01.08.1913:229) [*my emphasis*].

Vaughan Williams characterised Kidson's reliance on the printed source as an inherent 'distrust' of tradition, since any traditional deviations from a printed copy would necessarily be viewed as 'corruptions'. Sharp, on the other hand, in questioning whether the printed version could always be regarded as the 'original', thought that the printed version might itself often represent the distortion of a version which had already been current in tradition (1927:51).

The reader will recall that Kidson had himself drawn attention to this difference in their respective positions in a letter to Sharp (31.01.1908), commenting that it was a matter which could 'never, practically, be settled'.

The fact remains, however, that print or manuscript provided the only documentary evidence on which any interpretation could be based. In addition, we should always remember that between the closing years of the nineteenth century and his death in 1926, Kidson's life had been dominated by his work on *British Music Publishers*. 'Facts' and 'proof' were at the heart of this venture, and Kidson's orientation towards the oral tradition must have been consolidated through constantly thinking in these terms. Graham reported that his life was 'ruled' by regard for 'unvarnished truth and meticulous accuracy' (1927:49),

and it is worth reiterating Kidson's expressed view that conclusions based upon anything other than 'proofs' can be no more than conjecture (01.08.1913:228).

Such reasoning failed to convince Vaughan Williams, who, almost three decades after the publication of *English Folk-Song*, still quoted Sharp's (1907:15) definitions of folk-music ('*the product of a race*') and art-music ('*the work of the individual*') verbatim, in support of his argument in relation to the communal origin of folk-song.

> In adhering to the belief that
>
> the individual has his share in the creation of the folk-song and the race has its share ... the folk-song evolves and becomes in reality the voice of the people (Vaughan Williams, 1934:60,66)

Vaughan Williams had only scorn for 'our scholarly friends' who speak of 'corruption':

> For there are those who would have us believe that the folk-songs which have been sung during the last hundred years are corrupted, imperfect, half-remembered relics of some mysterious 'original' (1934:66).

In the light of Boydell's words it is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that Vaughan Williams, like Sharp, was also a professed adherent of socialism.

The Phonograph

The 'gramophone' received relatively early recognition as a means of circumventing particular undesirable effects of the collector's mediation. Then recently appointed as Secretary of the Folk-Song Society, Lucy Broadwood delivered a lecture on folk-song collecting to the Musical Association on 14th. March 1905. Dr. W.H. Cummings, the

Chairman, commented in the discussion which followed that songs might be "very materially changed" by "the medium through which they pass before they come to us". Moreover, he had "no doubt" that songs were sometimes amended "according to the good taste or bad taste or whim or humour of those who take them down". The gramophone, by contrast, was capable of recording the songs "with all their errors" (Broadwood, 1905:107).

Fuller Maitland endorsed the Chairman's suggestion in asserting that "If the Folk-Song Society were rich enough we would buy one at once". He warned however that the machine would need to be sited in a "back parlour", for otherwise "the country folk", "so flabbergasted" by its performance, "would be afraid to sing" (Broadwood, 1905:108).

In addition to being recognised as likely to make singers even more nervous, the equipment was cumbersome and difficult to use: the cylinders, for instance, lasted for only some two and a half minutes (Pegg, 1976:19). Such considerations inhibited the widespread adoption of the phonograph as a collecting instrument.

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Percy Grainger had been present at Lucy Broadwood's Musical Association lecture, and was so enthused that he immediately joined the Folk-Song Society. The following month found him in Brigg for the North Lincolnshire Music Competitions, where, as the guest of Gervase Elwes (O'Brien, 1979:33-6), a prominent tenor and stalwart of the

Festival movement, Grainger was to conduct the full chorus at the final concert in *Men of Harlech* (*Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star*, 15.04.1905).

A 'novel but interesting feature' at Brigg that year was 'the singing by old men of dying out Lincolnshire songs', an event which 'aroused the greatest enthusiasm'. Frank Kidson, 'a great authority on the subject', was to act as judge. There were four competitors, who between them sang 'about ten songs, all of them genuine folk-songs'. Kidson awarded first prize to Joseph Taylor's *Creeping Jane*, whilst an 'old veteran' named Hilton secured second prize for *Early One Sweet May Morning*. Hilton had a 'bottle of medicine' which was believed to be whisky: its label instructed the patient to take 'two tablespoonfuls every three hours'. Despite his 85 years, he was 'in fine form', and 'evidently could have kept on singing for hours'. Dean Robinson's *The Old Yew (sic) With One Horn* was third (*Lindsey and Lincolnshire Star*, 15.04.1905).

Lucy Broadwood was also at Brigg, and together - Grainger noting the tune whilst Kidson and Broadwood took down the the words - the trio recorded several more songs which had not been sung in the competition. These three singers, and Joseph Taylor in particular, would prove rich sources for Grainger's later collecting (O'Brien, 1979:35-6; O'Shaughnessy, 1975:66).

Grainger had not only been encouraged to collect folk-song by Broadwood's lecture. He must also have been inspired by discussion of the phonograph, for, from the

summer of 1906 when he first tried it (Grainger, 1908:147), Grainger would become the major exponent of its use.

Kidson was profoundly unsympathetic to this collecting technique, as he made clear in his contribution to *English Folk-Song and Dance* (1915[a]:48-51). Although quite ready to acknowledge the 'praiseworthy' motives which inspired it, Kidson thought that transcriptions taken directly from phonograph recordings were 'generally complex and confusing', and characterised by 'excessively elaborate rhythms and shifting tonality'. The reader was invited to refer to 'some particular' *Journals* of the Folk Song Society for examples.

Although certain others - Sharp and Vaughan Williams for instance - toyed with the phonograph, there is no doubt as to which collector Kidson particularly had in mind. In a letter to Annie Gilchrist, Kidson had confessed himself 'a little bit appalled at Percy Grainger's Journal' (28.10.1908). *Six Dukes went a-fishin'*, one of the items from this collection, featured thirty-nine changes of time-signature in a song of only fifty-six bars (*Musical Times*, 01.09.1908).

Kidson's rejection of the phonograph as 'a ready and accurate instrument' for the notation of traditional melody resulted directly from his faith in the presumed existence of an authoritative or correct version. As far as he was concerned, the appearance of mixed rhythms, such as 2-4 time changing to 6-8, 7-8, 4-4, 5-8 and so forth, in the course of one short air, derived not from the original

structure of the tune, but rather resulted from the method of singing it.

Indeed, if the performance of any great singer were to be phonographed, and the actual note values faithfully transcribed, '[i]t would show a complexity of rhythms of which both the singer and the audience would be quite unaware' (1915[a]:49).

Of all the folk-song collectors, Grainger was perhaps the most scrupulous in attempting to transcribe what was actually heard as an end in itself, rather than noting material in such a way to ensure that it conformed with some predetermined model. It is worth mentioning, however, that even he stopped short of advocating the universal use of the phonograph. This was not on account of its presumed unsettling effect, for in Grainger's experience it did not upset 'the steady nerves of country-folk'. Indeed, he had been 'surprised to find how very readily the old singers took to singing into the machine' (1908:147). But because notation was no more representative of their 'whole artistic activity and import' than a piano arrangement would be of an orchestral score, Grainger emphasised that the phonograph was warranted only in the case of the '*individually and creatively gifted*' singer. By contrast, he 'fully realized' that the singing of 'less gifted individuals' did not 'repay anything more laborious than the more usual method of notation' (1908:151).

Yet since Grainger was himself the arbiter of whether a particular singer was 'gifted' - and, by implication,

able to produce a suitably 'authentic' or otherwise worthy rendition of a song - we yet again encounter, despite the phonograph's supposedly inherent neutrality in mediation, the operation of an externally imposed aesthetic.

Intended to give the collector a more complete appreciation of actual performance, the phonograph may paradoxically have encouraged a tendency on Grainger's part to seek beyond it. His 'exhaustive' examination of almost four hundred phonograph recordings convinced him that such 'primitive' music was characterised by its extreme complexity. Yet perhaps this is hardly surprising when, by his own admission, he had confined his recording to the 'individually and creatively gifted' - in other words, those most likely to produce a complex performance. He nevertheless felt secure in criticising those 'well-meaning' but 'ignorant' collectors who, by virtue of the methods they adopted, simplified folk-song 'out of all resemblance to its original self' (1915[a]:417,422).

The *Musical Herald* profile of Kidson expanded on his views in relation to Grainger's favoured method of collection:

> And there is no particular sanctity in the form in which an old air is sung by an old man or woman before whom a reverent collector sits with a phonograph. It is merely the version which the singer personally remembers or gives forth. So much the worse for the singer if his incapacity for time and tune leads him to change every measure and phrase out of the recognition of those who possess printed originals. As we sit in Mr. Kidson's study he shows us such original songs, free from modal eccentricities and innocent of 5-4 time. He loves the old songs and seeks to secure their preservation in their purity (01.08.1913:228) [*my emphasis*].

It was essentially a question of presumed intent. In Grainger's view, his favoured singers - those whom he chose to present as the 'dirty and magnificently ignorant rustics', the 'queer illiterate cronies from whom we get the English peasant songs' (1915:419,421) - meant to produce their renditions in exactly the way they did; and he may have been alone amongst the collectors of that era in aiming to accurately document for its own sake this aspect of what might be called 'peasant culture'. In terms which would doubtless hold resonance for Bauman, Grainger complained that

> We see on all hands the victorious on-march of our ruthless Western civilisation and the distressing spectacle of the gentle but complex native arts wilting before its irresistible simplicity (1915:434).

For Kidson, on the other hand, primarily concerned with the 'rescue' of tunes, any deviation from the standard set by what he thought of as the 'original' could be dismissed as simply mistaken. If 'an old man' was singing 'flat, out of tune, or with sundry changes of key', it was 'not desirable that the recording musician should follow him into the boggy places' (Kidson, 1915:62:30). He aimed at excluding anything that might be regarded as mere personal distortion of rhythm, intonation, or phrase (Graham, 1927:48-9), and was fully convinced that

> It is the business of the folk-song collector not to make a hard and fast record of one rendering of a folk-tune, with all its accidental inaccuracies, but to obtain what the singer obviously means (Kidson, 1915[a]:50-1) [*my emphasis*].

And what the singer 'obviously meant' to produce was

the version which had already appeared in print.

As an argument, this is clearly in some danger of becoming circular. It also appears to suggest that Kidson had adopted an approach to song collecting which he had at one time derided. In a letter written to Lucy Broadwood in 1893, he had criticised Shepherd and Baring Gould on the grounds that

> ... they do not give the different versions of the air as noted down ... but give what they imagine to be the correct form of it compiled from all the ones they have got (14.05.1893).

This, as I understand it, is the technique which he himself now advocated; in direct contravention, incidentally, of the guidelines issued by the Folk-Song Society in its *Hints to Collectors*, which had stated that

> Just as it is desirable that the words of a ballad should be given exactly as they were repeated, so it is essential that the tunes should represent what the collector hears (*Musical Times*, 01.10.1904:640).

Kidson would eventually pursue his concept of the accurate original version of a song some way past its logical conclusion, thereby adopting a position which is frankly indefensible. In one of his last articles on the subject, he wrote that

> It is on ballad sheets that folk-songs in their original state are only found. The folk-song expert has almost always to 'clean' them up before presentation to a modern audience. And this process of cleaning and smoothing lines can be done either artistically or the reverse, for truly the ballad printer who took down from the imperfect recitation the ballad he issued was not to be depended upon for either accuracy or delicacy (1922:149:89).

Here, Kidson appears to contend that the correct

version of a song can never be found other than on the ballad sheet: yet even for a song to feature on a ballad sheet provides no guarantee that it necessarily appears in its 'original' state. Although it was a term he eschewed, preferring to call himself a 'collector' (*Manchester Guardian*, 16.11.1926), the most troubling aspect of this formulation is that the only person able to first identify, and then correct, the presumed errors of the song's reciter, printer, or any other participant in the creation of the ballad sheet, is the contemporary folk-song 'expert' - in this instance, himself. So much amongst his books and ballad sheets, Kidson came to invest ultimate authority in his own interpretation of them.

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> *... folk-song, which is the object of pious cult among a certain section of musical England, is practically unknown to the English public, and the loss is not greatly to be deplored* (Newmarch, [*quoted in*] *Musical Herald*, 01.09.1912:281).
>
> *... when cultivated adults set off dabbling in the dew and playing at jolly blacksmiths I can only regard it as another phase of that Arcadianism which has at all periods been the occasional amusement of the idle rich* (Edward J. Dent [*quoted in*] *Musical Herald*, 01.01.1919:18).

For Bauman, the postmodern era is understood as the era of modernity's re-evaluation (1992:115). He usefully characterises modernity as a 'frontier civilisation', where the war against chaos 'splits into a multitude of local battles for order' (1991:8-14). When researching such a subject as the first folk revival it is easy to forget that this element of the project of modernity was, in overall terms, little more than a minor skirmish.

In this examination of the development of the folk-song movement, the primary focus of attention has been the experience of just one man. Frank Kidson, the pioneer, was first active in the collection of folk-song at a time when only a handful of like-minded individuals worked in ignorance of each others' efforts - before any movement, as such, existed.

As a movement developed, and entered its legislative phase, Kidson stayed close to the centre of events: not always in sympathy with what transpired, but nevertheless ready to play his part in his own way.

Until his death on 23rd. June, 1924, Cecil Sharp, the legislator, remained 'leader, arbiter and theorist' of the

movement which he had come to dominate, and his influence would persist long after it. Figures such as Somervell and Newman were won over to become advocates of Sharp's position (Fox Strangways, 1933:183), and, despite all its contradictions, Sharp's theory of folk-song became international orthodoxy: the definition of folk music accepted in 1954 by the International Folk Music Council derives from that which Sharp had set out in *English Folk-Song* (Boyes, 1993:95-6; Lloyd, 1967:15).

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> *His career has been a long one ... He began his adventures in the very heart of the later Victorian era, carried it through the all-too-short reign of Edward, and has managed to hold his own little niche even in these feverish days* (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Preface* to *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*, 1927).

Kidson continued to tread his own path after Sharp died. In August 1926, on the last of his 'very rare' visits to London, he participated in a wireless broadcast of several songs from his and Moffat's latest book, *A Garland of English Folk-Songs* (Broadwood, 20.11.1926).

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The establishment in London of a 'national centre for the folk-music and dance music of England' was Sharp's 'fondest hope', occupying his thoughts 'more than anything else' in the last years of his life. Within a year of his death, the Cecil Sharp Memorial Fund had raised over £5,000 towards the construction of a building with offices, a large hall and library; the nucleus of which, bequeathed to the English Folk Dance Society, would be Sharp's own

collection of over 700 items (Hyatt King, 1963:85; *The Times*, 18.05.1925; *Music and Letters*, October 1925:289).

Some of the money had been raised by children 'who love folk dancing', and wanted to 'join in the memorial to the man who made it available for them'. The Prime Minister of the day commented that the establishment of a national centre for the study and practice of folk song and dance provided

> ... one more proof that our class distinctions are really superficial in comparison with the underlying unity of feeling of our people ([*quoted in*] *Music and Letters*, October 1925:289).

Sharp had, in Winifred Shuldham Shaw's estimation, averted 'national disaster' (1921:9). Five years after his death, Karpeles and Kimber laid the foundation stone of the building in Regent's Park Road. The inscription reads:

> This building is erected in memory of Cecil Sharp who restored to the English people the songs and dances of their country (Fox Strangways, 1933:198).

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> .... *the days of the great cases are past* (Sherlock Holmes [in] *The Copper Beeches* [1892]: Conan Doyle, 1928:277).

It would prove much more difficult to secure a home for Kidson's collection.

A 'very severe' attack of pneumonia during the war left him with the permanent heart weakness which ultimately caused his demise (Ethel Kidson, [?]1926:105-6). As he grew older, his concern about the fate of the collection he had nurtured for so many years grew likewise, to be highlighted in one of the articles he wrote for the Collector series:

> He thought he was getting old and feeble, and fell to wondering what, when he had passed away, would become of all these things he had so lovingly collected and cherished ... The thought made the Collector shiver, and yet the puzzle remained (1922:149:89).

Late in life, Kidson had offered his complete collection to his native city, but it had been 'politely declined' (Farmer, 1950:14). Why this should have been is unclear. Grove had noted a policy of extending the musical portion of the Library, and to this end, 'considerable' purchases had been made at the sale of the Taphouse collection (1910:II:704). Whatever the reason, it was decided that the Kidson Collection could be managed without.

Ethel Kidson made further approaches after her uncle's death, only to be disappointed when his 'own Leeds' spent a full year in the 'consideration and final rejection' of it (letter to Broadwood, 01.05.1928). Thereafter her aim simply became one of keeping the collection together.

Lucy Broadwood tried to place it in both Oxford University (Sadler, letter to Broadwood 02.05.1928) and the Royal College of Music, but neither were in a position to purchase. On behalf of the latter institution, Hugh Allen wished that they could afford it, for 'I would buy it gladly'. He suggested instead that Harvard University might be interested in acquiring such a collection (letter to Broadwood, 02.05.1928).

Ethel Kidson had no objection to the books going to an academic library in America, and - in view of the response from Leeds - believed that her uncle would have felt the

same. He had valued the library at one thousand pounds, which Moffat and Cook thought too little. But Ethel was quite prepared to sell at her uncle's price, particularly since 'at this sum it was rejected by the Leeds people' (letter to Broadwood, 05.05.1928).

Davidson Cook was also in favour of sale to an American university. If that option failed, it probably meant dispersal through Sotheby's. He very much hoped that Harvard would make the purchase: with 'a millionaire at their back it should simplify matters if they are really keen to acquire the Kidson treasures', he enthused (letters to Broadwood, 30.05.1928; 04.06.1928).

Over a year later, Broadwood heard from Ethel Kidson that she had sold the collection to Glasgow for £500 (letter, 25.08.1929). Perhaps because of the small amount realised, Hyatt King mistakenly categorised the transfer of the Kidson Collection to the Mitchell Library as a 'bequest' (1963:146). A decade after its disposal, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (19.6.1939) wondered 'why this wonderful collection was allowed to leave Leeds' ([*quoted in*] Farmer, 1950:14).

It is impossible to determine the contents of the library as they stood at Kidson's death, for some items were retained by Ethel, and others sold individually (Smith, 1948:132). Farmer thought that 'perhaps some two-thirds' of it went to Glasgow, where a 'rough and casual' assessment placed its extent at two to three thousand volumes. This figure would subsequently be revised

to four thousand (Farmer, 1950:14). But if all the individual songs and items of instrumental music are included - many of which are bound together in large folio volumes - the number of separate items in the collection stands at nine thousand. Of these, not until the late 1950s would it be discovered that over seven hundred items - the same figure as Sharp's entire collection - represent the only known surviving copy (*Mitchell Library Centenary Booklet*, 1977:81,84).

Although 'rich' in folk-songs, folk-dances and other popular music (Farmer, 1950:15), there had been no suggestion of a 'national centre' to house the Kidson Collection, nor any memorial fund to pay for it. If this should now come as a complete surprise to the reader, I confess to having failed in my task.

Perhaps Kidson's posthumous reputation reached its nadir in his centenary year. Although the book would again achieve recognition as 'a balanced sample from the folk song tradition of Northern England and Southern Scotland in the late nineteenth century' (*Mitchell Library Centenary Booklet*, 1977:80), Ernest Bradbury commented - in the *Yorkshire Post*, of all newspapers - that Kidson's *Traditional Tunes* 'does not bring us remotely within range of true folk-song as that subject is known to musicians' (12.11.1955). Re-assessment in the light of refined Sharpian orthodoxy had ensured that even the songs which Kidson collected had somehow become the wrong sort.

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It was indicated in *Chapter 1* that the creation of a biography of Frank Kidson was not the primary purpose of this study. Rather, those elements of his biography which relate to the historically constructed reality of the folk-song movement have been abstracted from the totality of his life - with the result that much which might have featured in a purely biographical study has necessarily been excluded.

In the attempt to impose coherence on historical phenomena, figures from the past are retrospectively ascribed membership of 'networks' - constructions which might become more rigid as time passes, or be undermined by newer alternative formulations. The folk-song movement is one such construction. In tracing its development in the shadow of Sharp, conventional discourse looked back to this towering figure; and behind him, dutifully paving his way, were to be found the pioneers ([*see, for instance*], Lloyd (1967). An inherent inevitability of outcome characterised such accounts: cohesion reigned.

It is worth mentioning in this regard that whilst Kidson's 'independent spirit' - so pronounced that at nine years old this lifelong abstainer had been ostracised by his schoolfellows for refusing to sign the pledge: he responded by singing a song in praise of grog (Ethel Kidson [?]1926:41-3), thereby convincing his friend John Graham (1927:48) that '[t]he child was father to the man' - was acknowledged to have 'set him apart from, and often at variance with later collectors' (*Portraits*, 1948:135),

Palmer, as the first to undertake a serious evaluation of Kidson's collecting career, nevertheless professes to 'have seen nothing to justify the suggestion' (1986[b]:160). As A.D. Flower had so glibly put it at the 1910 Stratford Festival [*see Chapter 9*], all those concerned were perceived to be working together with "one great object at heart, to bring more joy into the life of the people" (*Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, 12.08.1910).

In common with Judge's work, this study has perhaps helped to cast doubt on such a veneer of singleminded unity through demonstrating that the various participants had their own distinct preconceptions, motivations and aspirations. The attitudes and ideas which they brought to the movement - perhaps as composers, antiquarians, educationalists or social reformers - largely determined what they wanted from it, or wanted it to be.

At the end of the twentieth century Kidson is principally remembered on account of this folk-song connection, for it is folk-song discourse which has kept his name alive. Yet we must never lose sight of the fact that evaluations of Kidson's life ([*see, for instance*] Broadwood, 20.11.1926; H.T., 12.11.1926) frequently cite *British Music Publishers* (1900) as his greatest achievement. Although one of Kidson's earliest published works, the preparation of a second edition [*as we saw in Chapter 3*] was to dominate the remainder of his life.

In one sense, the importance of this project to Kidson's biography remains undiminished by the fact that

the revision would never appear. Yet if a second edition had been published, perhaps two or three years before his death, we could locate many of Kidson's other publications on a path culminating in this triumph. Instead, they appear in his bibliography against the backdrop of a void.

The importance which this endeavour held for Kidson can be gauged if I say - as I believe to be the case - that despite in many ways being complementary, the whole 'folk' revival was, for him, of subsidiary interest to it. His natural orbit remained that parallel one of the musical antiquarians.

Much of the value of Ethel Kidson's *Life of Frank Kidson* lies in the fact that because it has been composed from a perspective outside that of folk-song discourse, the prime reference point is not a movement but the man himself. In consequence, anyone expecting to read about her uncle's place in the folk revival will find the text disconcerting: for that becomes simply one facet of this 'life'. The prominence accorded to his various associates bears little or no relation to their wider fame, and - besides establishing the relationships between Kidson's various activities - one of the aims of this dissertation has been to shed some small light on those who have hitherto eluded incorporation into any historian's 'networks'.

Through focusing on only certain aspects of his life, it is clear that less than full justice has been done to Frank Kidson the person. 'No man knew more of old Leeds

than Mr. Kidson', the *Leeds Mercury* reported (09.11.1926). Yet we have scarcely mentioned that aspect of his work, or his co-workers in the Leeds Exhibitions, such as Emily Hargrave, or Thomas Hand, the Librarian. We have not mentioned his pioneering folk-opera *The Golden Wedding* (1910) - written in association with the ill-fated Arthur Grimshaw, son of the famous artist - or his later pioneering work with the Killinghall Players in the production of village plays (Ladell, 22.08.1921). His extensive labour in the Dickensian cause has similarly escaped attention.

It is a matter of regret that in attempting to chronicle the development of the folk-song movement through the experience of one particular participant, I have to some extent also helped to perpetuate the notion that Frank Kidson - the 'musical Sherlock Holmes' - was first and foremost a folk-song collector.

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Great is the labour and little is the reward of the folk-song collector, but the work he does will live after him. May Mr. Kidson live long to continue his work. Assuredly he will be remembered long in the land (*Musical Herald*, 01.08.1913).

His retired life and singular modesty are responsible for his being less famous than his learning and his personality deserved (Broadwood, 1927:48).

> *... less happily he lived to be obscured where once he had been considered foremost in authority* (*Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1948:135).

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In the mid-1920s, a full page of the Saturday edition of the *Daily Telegraph* was devoted to *Music of the Day*. At its centre, *The Musicians' Gallery* featured the framed portrait of a notable musical personality. On the 6th. February 1926, just nine months before his death, the legend beneath this photograph read simply:

Mr. Frank Kidson. A pioneer of folk-song revival.

The role of 'pioneer' appears to have been one in which Kidson took solace; it acknowledged his participation in the earliest phase of the movement, yet at the same time distanced him from those developments associated with its transformation to a 'cult'. In his seventy-first year, a pioneer was what he was content to remain.

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